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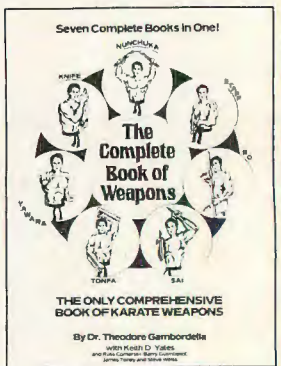
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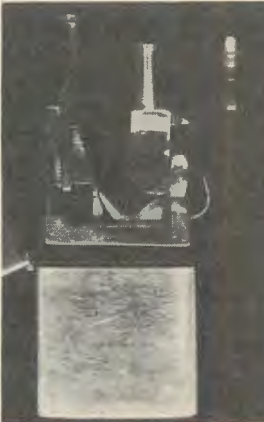


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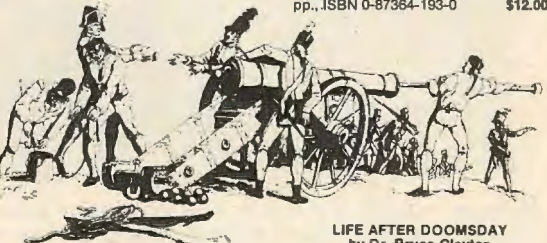
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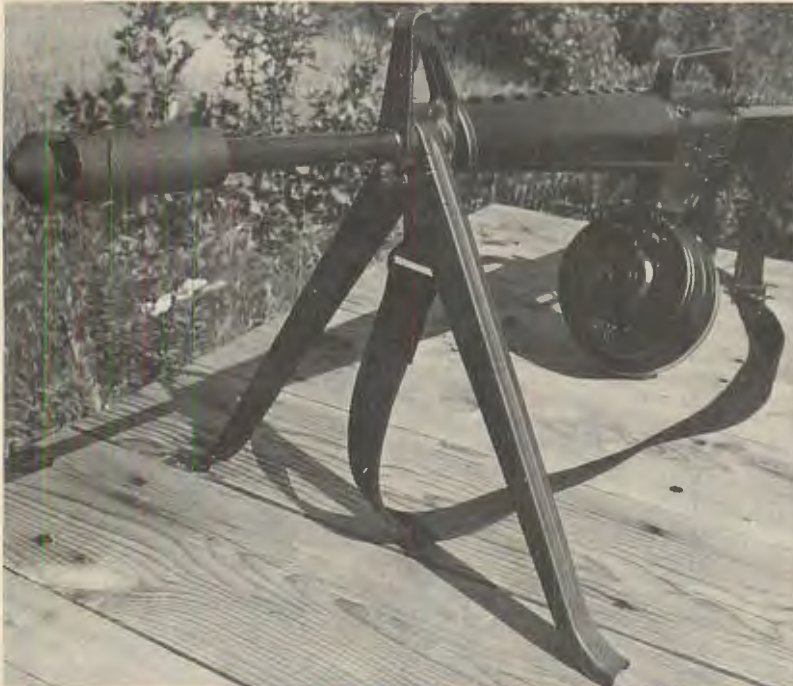
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# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

MARCH/1981

COVER: South African Air Force Squadron 17 Alouette III helicopter hovers over one of larger lakes in Northern Transvaal. Squadron's Capt. Tinus van Rensburg was flying Alouette III when shot down in Angola. Story of his escape begins on p. 46. Photo: Al J. Venter

VOL. 6, NO. 3

## SHARPSHOOTING WITH CHAIRMAN JEFF 10

**Andy Tillman**  
A scope in time for HK 91.

## 1980 AUSA CONVENTION 26

**Robert K. Brown**  
Military hardware meets the brass.

## OPERATION LAUREL & HARDY 30

**Tony Geraghty**  
British dogs of war catch no cats on this caper.

## DUBIOUS VICTORY 33

**Jeffrey Stephens**  
Black Virgin shadows assault of NVA stronghold.

## MOROCCO'S MURDEROUS MARAUDERS 35

**Robert Roman**  
Legion deserter leads Rifs from Mountains of the Moon.

## SILENT ENEMY 38

**Bill L. Boggs**  
How to survive when it's cold outside.

## ESCAPE AND EVADE 46

**Al J. Venter**  
South African chopper pilot crashes in Angola.

## VANG PAO'S ENDLESS STRUGGLE 52

**Bob Poos**  
SOF salutes Laotian leader.

## ABERDEEN RANGES IN ON RUSSIA'S NEW ROUND 56

**Galen L. Geer**  
Soviet bullet produces surprises in first tests.



Page 35

Photo: Wide World

## DOG DAY AFTERNOON 64

**Jake Jatras**  
Assault-rifle course holds ups and downs.

## AUSSIE ASSAULT RIFLE 88

**Al Myka**  
Down Under Leader comes to USA.



Page 46



Page 56

Bulletin Board . . . . .	6
FLAK . . . . .	8
Combat Pistolcraft . . . . .	12
Adventure Quartermaster . . . . .	14
In Review . . . . .	24
I Was There . . . . .	28
Classifieds . . . . .	92
Advertisers' Index . . . . .	94



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# BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos



## VIETNAM VETS MEMORIAL FUND ...

No one knows more than the readers of this magazine about the shabby treatment afforded the veteran — particularly the combat veteran — of the Vietnam war, called by those who both supported and opposed it the most unpopular war ever fought by the U.S.

Shabby treatment indeed. Many of us were spat upon when returning to the World in uniform. One true story is that of a man attending school on the GI Bill. Someone asked him how he lost the arm that used to be in his pinned-up sleeve. "Got hit in Vietnam."

The response: "Serves you right."

At last, the Vietnam veteran is going to get a little respect and recognition.

Congress has passed a bill setting aside two acres of ground near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington as the location for a memorial to the men who served in Vietnam: 2,700,000 of them, including the 300,000 wounded and the 57,000-plus killed.

Appropriately, most of the money paying for the Memorial will probably come from the Vietnam vets themselves. Not one nickel of taxpayer money will go into it. The only government action is the deeding of the land. The money for the monument is being raised entirely through private subscription.

And who but the Vietnam vets much give a damn what we did over there?

SOF is going to make a \$500 contribution to this cause and although we seldom solicit readership donations to anything, we are this time.

A little background on the Memorial. It is the brainchild of a man named Jan Scruggs, a combat infantryman who was wounded in 'Nam and is now a Labor Department specialist in equal opportunity programs.

Working tirelessly, Scruggs persuaded such diverse characters as Rosalynn Carter and Jerry Ford to back this project. He talked Bob Hope into writing a fund-raising letter for the Memorial.

All 100 U.S. Senators in office at

the time were signed as co-sponsors of a bill setting aside the land — a notable feat of unity for that body.

Now the money itself must be raised. Somewhat more than \$275,000 of the \$2.5 million required has come in thus far. But the rest is needed.

A non-profit group known as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, headed by Scruggs, is the fund raiser and will "establish a memorial in keeping with the dignity of its surroundings and the solemnity of its purpose."

The VVMF criteria are: Inscription of the names of the 57,661 Americans killed; sculpture symbolizing the experience of Americans who served in Vietnam; an overall landscaped design; a living memorial in harmony with its surroundings; a spacious garden setting inviting to passersby; and artistic integrity of design, components and materials.

The design and plans for the memorial will be subject to approval of the National Commission of Fine Arts.

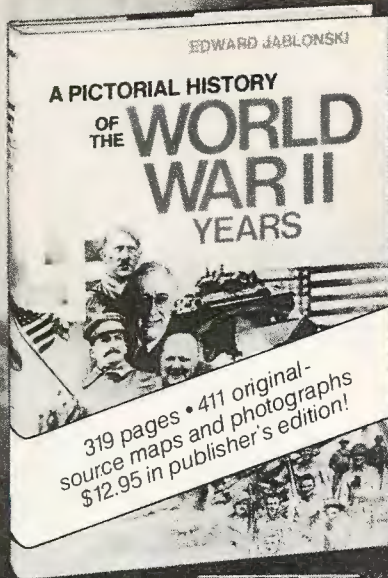
Those wishing to contribute to this worthwhile program may do so by sending donations to: Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc., 1025 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 405, Washington, D.C. 20036. Inquiries may be made by calling (202) 659-1151.

## COLORADO TO GO AIRBORNE ...

The First Airborne Division, which supervised the recent parachute jump school in Columbia, Mo., during the first annual *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine convention, seeks to form a Colorado Brigade.

Anyone from Colorado or nearby states who has military parachute experience, USPA jump training or First Airborne training may contact Lewis Elliot, P.O. Box 276, Cascade, CO 80809.

Continued on page 86



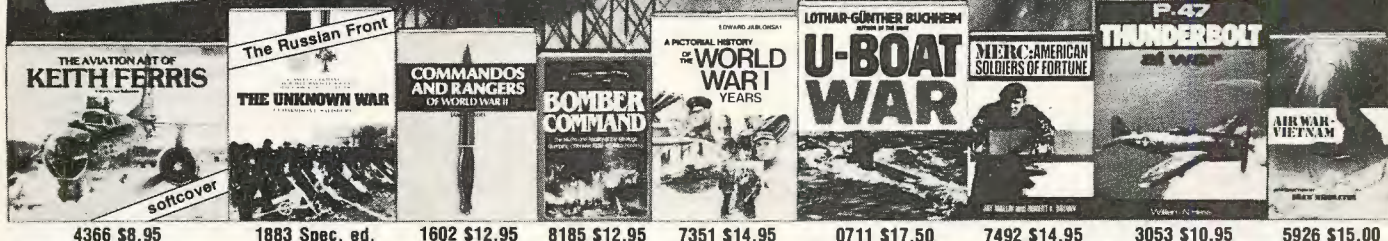
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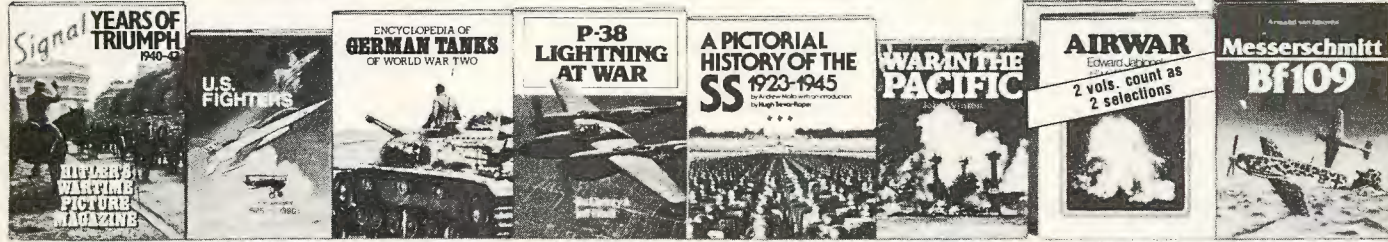
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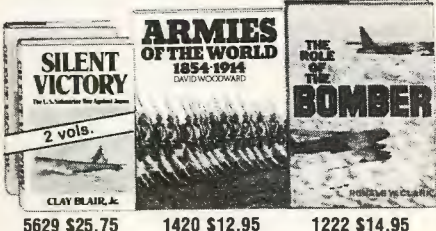
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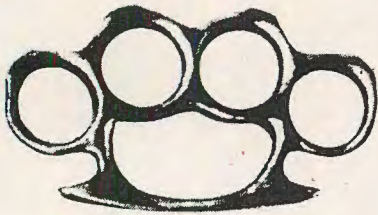
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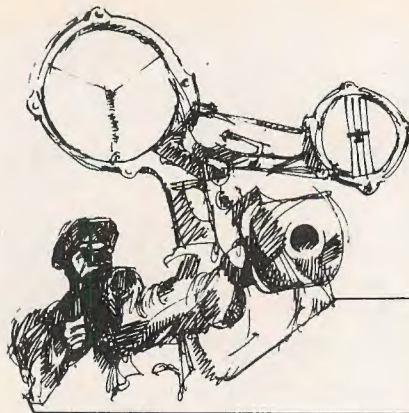
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## FLAK

### BATF CHARGES FAKED OUT ...

Sirs:

Many, many thanks for "Dangerous Conversion" (SOF, December '80). I only hope all your readers take heed so that what happened to me will not happen to any of them. After my honorable discharge from the U.S. Army (101st Airborne Div./Ranger/LRRP) after 14 years' service, I started to collect WWII military weapons, and because I had gone into law enforcement, I also had quite a collection of handguns. Because of the price of some of the weapons I wanted to add to my collection, I purchased a German WWII Schmeisser MP-40 (a fake gun) to round out my collection. All of my weapons

were on display in my den at home.

Over the months, quite a few people came to my home with my friends to see my collection. That was my big mistake. On 21 December 1972 at 1630 hours, there was a knock on my door. When I opened it, in came three special agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms of the U.S. Treasury Department and a local police sergeant. They pushed me aside and went to the kitchen door to let in two more BATF agents.

They gave me a search warrant and commenced to search my home. Finding the German MP-40, they looked it over and would not believe it was a fake until I showed them the bill of sale and the letter from BATF that came with the weapon. They saw all my handguns and, when I produced my badge and ID, they said they might have made a mistake due to the information they received from an informant. I am still trying to find out who he was.

I asked them why so many agents came to my home and they said, due to my training and decorations while in the military, I was considered dangerous and they didn't know what to expect. I asked them if this were the end of everything. They told me the U.S. Attorney would decline to prosecute my case but I still had to send forms to the BATF in Washington and request relief from liabilities.

After six months I received a letter from Rex Davis, head of BATF at that time, who informed me that my request had been granted and that the appropriate BATF officers would be informed of the favorable conclusion of the matter. I still have the search warrant as a reminder of their visit. Had I been convicted I understand the penalty could have been a \$10,000 fine and/or ten years imprisonment — and a record for the rest of my life.

Respectfully,  
Lt. Joseph F. Nalis  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Continued on page 91



**Assault Rifle Case** (left) black or camouflage. Constructed of nylon. Keep your weapons system ready to go. Available for all assault rifles. They will carry; Rifle, five 30 round magazines, scope, suppressor, bi-pod, hand gun & more. Military quality - fully padded inside. All enclosures are velcro or zippered. Comes complete with padded adjustable shoulder sling & carrying handle. **\$50.** plus \$2.50 postage/handling



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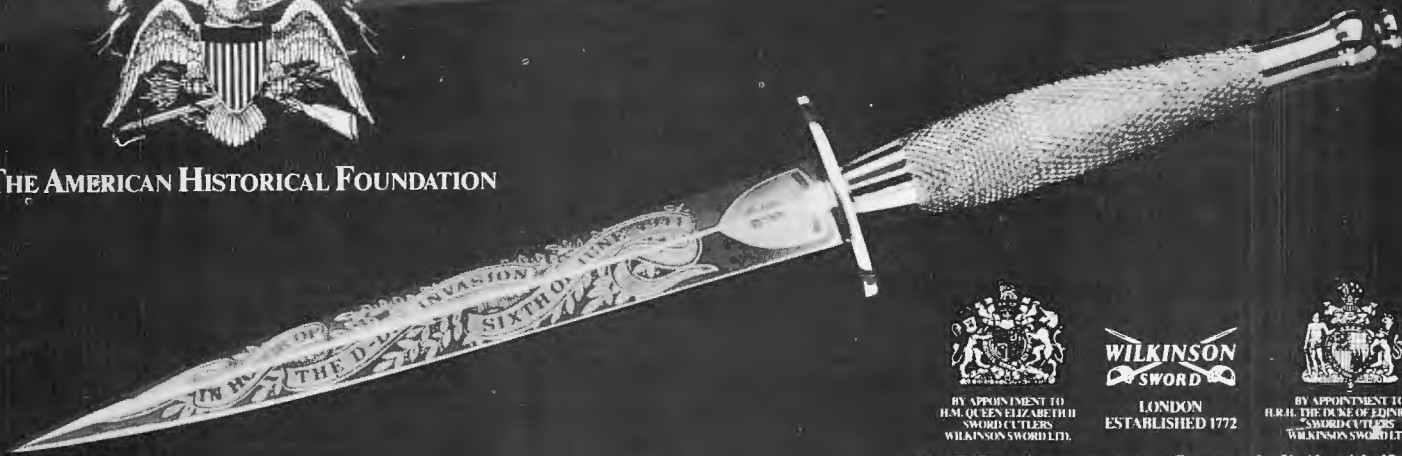


# D-DAY

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*Dwight D. Eisenhower*

(Night of June 5-6, 1944)

The greatest invasion of all time—D-Day, 6 June 1944—is now being honored by The American Historical Foundation and Wilkinson Sword Limited of London through the issuance of the same famous World War II Commando Knife carried in the invasion of Hitler's "Fortress Europe" by many of the heroic American, British and other Allied soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines.

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Only twenty-five hundred will be made worldwide for collectors, military historians, museums and soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines of World War II and their families. Each knife will be individually numbered and registered with The American Historical Foundation. A luxurious, dark-green, velvet-lined and fitted, richly gold-tooled presentation case with brass closure clasps will accompany your knife. This is the most spectacular version ever issued of this Commando Knife; experts agree that these will be greatly sought after by collectors.

You will own a legacy of one of the proudest moments in American history, which can be passed along to future generations of your family to serve as

a reminder to them of your interest in military history and quite possibly of your participation, or the participation of one of your relatives, in this heroic assault.

You will also take pride in owning one of the finest examples of English craftsmanship ever created—a rare and unusual showpiece which can be exhibited and enjoyed. When you hold this classic knife in your hand and feel its absolutely perfect balance (probably unlike anything you've ever held before), you will know why it is considered one of the greatest knives of all time.

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The world-renowned Swordsmiths of Wilkinson Sword Limited in London will forge the battle-worthy blade of your knife from a red hot billet of high carbon sword steel. They will harden and temper the blade to the most demanding combat standards. Then they will precisely grind the blade, polish it to a mirror finish and elaborately etch it on both sides. It will be one of the finest examples of artistry-in-steel ever created.

The inscription in the foliate banner on the presentation side of the blade reads: "In Honor of the D-Day Invasion, Sixth of June, 1944." The insignia of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, representative of the victorious joint Allied effort under the command of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, crowns the shoulder of the blade.

On the reverse of the blade the Swordsmiths will etch in an elaborate banner General Eisenhower's famous pre-invasion command: "Accept Nothing Less Than Full Victory!" For the first time since the war, the wartime Wilkinson Sword crossed-sword trademark will be etched on the shoulder of the blade. This has been selected from the historic Wilkinson Sword pattern library in London especially for this issue.

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The Swordsmith will then hand fit the magnificent 18 karat gold-on-brass chequered grip and top nut and richly gold-plated steel cross guard to the full-length blade tang for perfect alignment and combat strength. Finally, the Swordsmith will sight down the blade, test the balance of the knife in his experienced hands and inspect the knife in all particulars before giving it his final nod of approval—both as a battle-

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To accompany your knife and display case you will also receive an exact reproduction of the historic command letter signed by General Eisenhower and distributed to the troops of the invasion armada the night before D-Day. This and the numbered Certificate of Authenticity can be displayed with your knife.

You will also be made a member of The American Historical Foundation and have the opportunity to add to your collection subsequent limited edition knife issues in this series, with matching registry numbers. These knives, with different spectacular finishes and materials, will honor other major World War II Allied victories. As a member, you will also receive, at no expense, hard-to-obtain expert information concerning the history, care, display and collecting of knives and swords.

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# SHARPSHOOTING WITH CHAIRMAN JEFF



Author fires HK 91 with Keith Hamilton-installed scope mount.

## Scoping the HK 91

Text & Photos  
by Andy Tillman

Jeff Cooper is the Honorary Lifetime Chairman of the International Practical Shooting Confederation, and thus combines official authority with his vast background and experience. In this column Cooper will alternate his own observations with those of other experts of his personal selection.

Andy Tillman operates a ranch in eastern Oregon. When Cooper heard of his solution to scoping the HK 91, he wrote Andy, asking him to contribute this article to "Sharpshooting."  
—M.L. Jones

*The Heckler & Koch Model 91 rifle, a BATF-approved version of the current German army weapon, is probably the most popular piece of its type in private use in the United States. Certainly we see a lot of them at our rifle classes at Gun-site. It is a good gun — strong, reliable and very accurate. On the other hand, it has various drawbacks such as:*

(a) You can't immediately tell when it is empty.

(b) It is hard on brass.

(c) It ejects so violently that it is bothersome on a firing line.

(d) Its trigger mechanism is not suitable for precision shooting and is practically impossible to tune.

(e) It has the worst-fitted sights of any weapon of its type in general use.

Andy Tillman, of Athena, Ore., has set to work on this last matter and has come up with a promising solution. He writes as follows:

I have wanted a scope mount for my HK 91 ever since I found out how accurate it was. However, the price and design of the factory item have kept me from ordering one. When available, they cost about \$150, plus about \$30 for one-inch rings. If the mount were well designed, I would probably have broken down and paid the price; but it isn't. I am not saying it is not well made, mind you — just that it is not well designed. There is a difference.

In my opinion, the designers at HK, or perhaps the German army which specified the mount be made a certain way, have done one thing wrong. They selected a

*Continued on page 82*



Quick-detachable lever being rotated forward.



After pivoting scope around on front ring, scope and rings can be removed.

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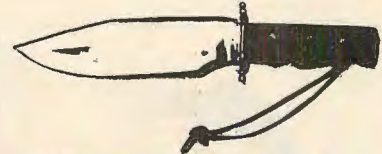
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**2. STILETTO KNIFE** — This is a fighting knife, designed for combat. The blade is 8", the handle 5", and the guard of heavy brass. This knife can be used by the hunter and fisherman who are attracted to its unusual design and beautiful symmetry. \$15.95



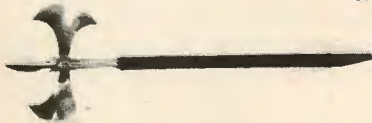
**3. MARTIAL BOWIE KNIFE** — Is of similar quality to the traditional Bowie, however the blade is 11" and the design is completely original. This is a massive knife, its unique design appealing both to the collector and the sportsman. \$15.95



**4. COMBAT BOWIE KNIFE** — This knife has an 8" blade, 5" finger grip handle and a leather wrist thong. This blade is unusually heavy and sharpened on both sides, as is any true combat knife. This all-around field companion is similar to the knife issued to America's front line troops. \$15.95

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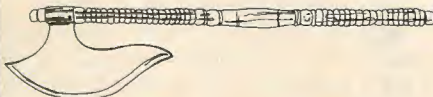
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# COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

**Ken Hackathorn**

**M**AINTEINING a positive grip on the .45 auto from the time it is grasped in the holster until the pistol discharges at the end of the firing stroke is critical. Anything that makes this technique easier is certainly welcome. If one must draw from a concealable holster, the speed with which he achieves a firm, smooth grip is usually slower. Although

speed rigs and competition holsters position the butt of the pistol well away from the body, the concealment holster carries the entire pistol—especially the butt—in close to it.

Sliding a .45 out of the leather and still getting a positive grip for fast-action shooting is sometimes more difficult than many people realize. A year or so back, I came upon a pair of custom stocks for my .45 auto made by Jerry Bunch, Dept. SOF, 510 N.W. 10th St., Hermiston, OR 97838 (Combat Pistolcraft, SOF, April '80). Recently, Bunch and holster-maker Bill Rogers got together and came up with a version of these fine stocks made of a synthetic material.

These Bunch-designed "PPS" stocks, sold by Rogers Holsters, Dept. SOF, 10601 Theresa Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32216, solve the problem of hand placement on the pistol for a secure firing grip regardless of how the pistol is worn. I have been testing these stocks for some time and find them to be very effective in achieving a positive firing grip regardless of hand position when the pistol first starts out of the leather. A swell at the bottom of the Rogers PPS stock forces the fingers up against the bottom of the trigger guard and prevents the hand from slipping down on the weapon so that one has a solid, firm grip each time the pistol is drawn for the firing stroke.

Priced at \$14.95 in black, the Rogers PPS stocks are more than reasonable in price. I can recommend them to anyone who wants a fast, solid grip without the sticky feeling of some other synthetic stocks on the market. Pachmayr stocks are fine for combat shooting, but if one grips his weapon improperly, because of the security of the neoprene surface, he finds a correction difficult to make.

**N**OW that the IPSC international body has adopted a new holster rule, many competitors will have to adapt to a concealable holster — a great change when one considers the technique of the draw. Even if this rule is enforced only in national and international contests, most shooters will change over to a street-concealable holster over the next few years.

Several good designs are already on the market — such old favorites as the Summer Special by Milt Sparks and the model 455 Security by Gordon Davis have already proven themselves in the past. For regular belt usage, the M453 Liberty crossdraw and the Bruce Nelson crossdraw holsters are tops. The Sparks No. 1 rig or Davis Realist are also ideal for normal hip wear.

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Bianchi now provides a number of good holsters over the counter. The "Pistol-pocket" inside-the-pants holster is selling very well, as is the Askins Avenger hip holster. Richard Nickols of Bianchi Gunleather has been showing off a couple of designs that his R&D department has come up with. The first is a strong side-hip holster, identical to the Chapman Hi-Ride Model 50, except that it is worn with the pistol butt canted forward in the normal FBI cant. It is a fast-draw, concealable holster that offers both steel-lined construction and a tension device. It should be popular with those who want a holster that conforms to the new IPSC holster rule.

Nickols is also working on a double-lined version of the Model 4 Askins Avenger. Because of its design, it makes concealing a .45 easy for even a small person.

We must now wait and see how shooters comply with the new guidelines and how much speed is compromised. Anyone who has watched '78's U.S. Champion Ross Seyfried work from his Sparks No. 1 rig worn on his right hip can tell you he is fast, showing that with practice a shooter's speed with the new type of holster can match that of the competition ones.

**I**N the past, we have repeatedly heard the question, "What is the best magazine to buy for use with my .45 auto?" There are numerous magazine sources, but most are not ideal in function or quality. I have used magazines from about every supplier and have concluded that most are a waste of money.

I prefer the Laka-brand stainless magazines for first-line duty. My favorites, old WWII vintage GI magazines, are becoming more difficult to find. Gun shows and surplus dealers occasionally turn some up. For years Colt has produced fine magazines for issue with their own commercial guns. Recently, however, the stock Colt magazines have dropped in quality. Current Colt-manufactured magazines have a welded seam up the back that cracks with normal use, and the steel used in these magazines' construction is soft and peens out of shape in a short time. Let us hope that Colt returns to the good-quality magazines that it used to offer.

The really good news in .45 auto magazines comes from the new Laka No. 777 stainless-steel model. This newly designed magazine offers a no-jam follower and removable base plate, and feeds almost all bullet shapes. Its only drawback is that these Laka No. 777 mags hold only six rounds. Although this does not matter to bull's-eye target shooters who load five rounds, the combat shooter cannot afford to reduce his critical seven-round capacity.



Roger's PPS stocks on Jim Hoag-modified combat .45 auto. Note firm placement of fingers as result of lower swell provided on stocks.



Rogers PPS stock design is such that removal and speed loading of magazine does not interfere with normal use.

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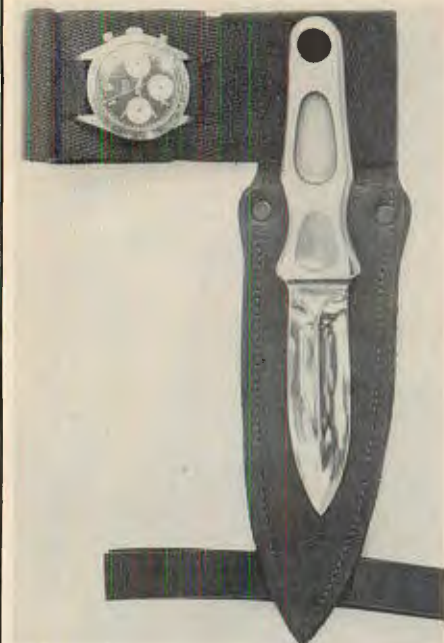
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Continued on page 18

# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by Cynthia E.D. Kite



## **B**BANDIT BAND ...

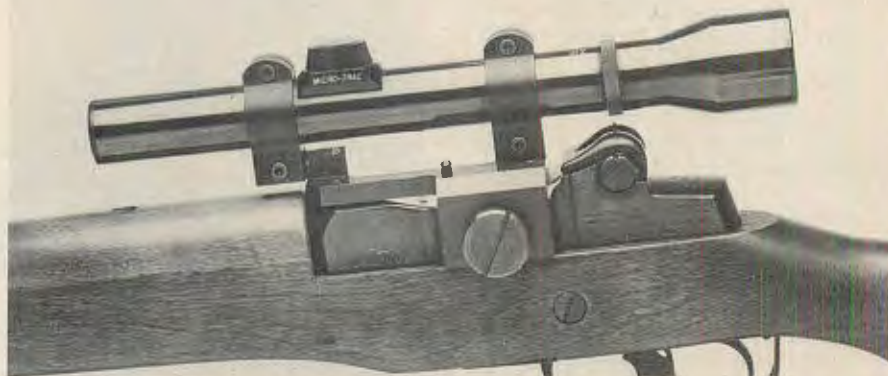
*Armament Systems Products, Unltd.* introduces the Bandit — a specialty rig combining a commando watchband and a knife sheath. The watchband, which can be detached and worn independently, serves as base support for the leather sheath, positioned to be worn comfortably spanning the underside of the forearm. The rig — designed for high-technology chronometers along with the A.G. Russell “Sting” and “Sting 1a” — will also accommodate the Tekna and similar low-profile edged weapons. The Bandit is available in black only in sizes small, medium, large and extra large for \$16 from Armanent Systems Products, Unltd., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 18595, Atlanta, GA 30326.

## **P**PERSONAL PACKER ...

*Seldeen Leathersmiths*, which has made its name designing custom-finished leather holsters for small-frame handguns, has come out with a new item: a “double-action holster.” The new holster was designed specifically with the .45 caliber automatic in mind, and allows the individual to chamber a round without drawing the gun.

The company lists their holsters at \$19.95 to \$39.95 according to the model selected. For more information write or call *Dick Seldeen*, Dept. SOF, 222 Ramona Place, Camarillo, CA 93010, (805) 482-5702.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: SOF does not endorse any item reported in Adventure Quartermaster. When possible, an appropriate SOF staffer tests and evaluates products submitted. Sometimes this cannot be done and SOF simply publishes basic factual information about new products that we feel may be of interest to readers.*



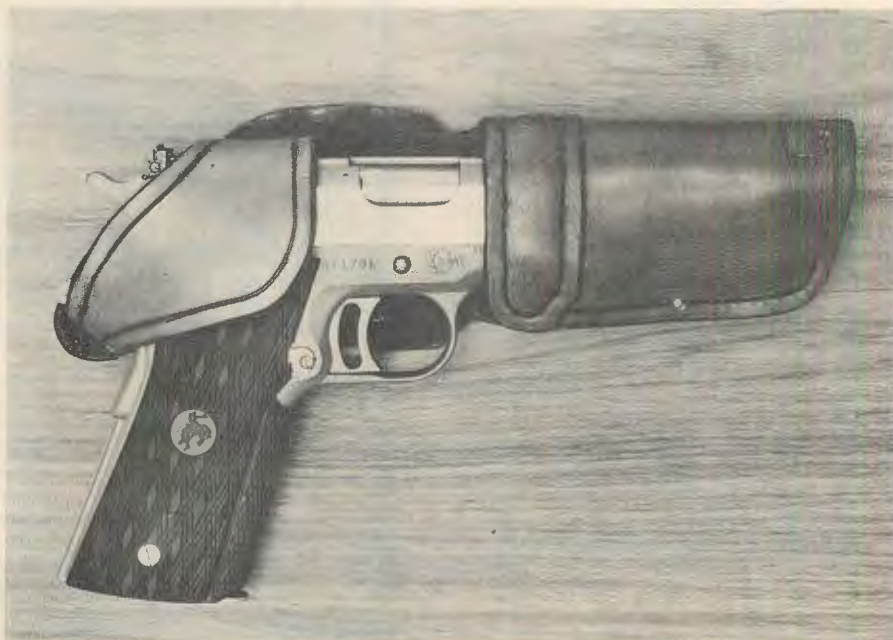
## **H**HASSLE-FREE MOUNTS ...

*B-Square Company*, which made the first Mini-14 scope mount, has now designed the first no-gunsmithing mount for this popular rifle. The new mount is installed by simply replacing the gun's bolt-stop cover plate with B-Square's cover plate — which can be done in a matter of seconds. No more drilling and tapping holes or removing the gun's rear sight. It is a rugged military-type mount with a single attach knob that can be removed and reinstalled without changing zero. It provides both windage and elevation adjustment so that any scope may be used. Also, it allows the scope of your choice to

be positioned further forward to give maximum eye relief — a problem with some other Mini-14 mounts.

And for those of you interested in an easy-on, easy-off scope mount for H&K 91/93 rifles that won't interfere with the sights, B-Square offers one that slides on and clamps to the receiver with two thumb screws. The mount is finished to match the gun and comes complete with one-inch scope rings.

Both mounts are available from dealers for \$49.95 or may be obtained direct from B-Square, Dept. SOF, Box 11281, Fort Worth, TX 76109 for an additional \$1.50.





## STAYING IN SHAPE ...

*Mustang Grips* announces the newest addition to its line of quality custom grips — Rangefield Neoprene® grips, made from what Mustang claims to be the “most durable 100 percent functional material available today.” Commonly referred to as “rubber” grips, these new models apparently offer two significant advantages over other “rubber” grips. They incorporate no steel inserts, so the grips will never bend out of shape, nor will there ever be a sharp edge to wear through and threaten your hand. The real value of Neoprene® lies in its physical properties, which allow for better recoil absorption and better conformity to the shooter’s hand. Its scratch-resistant, non-slip surface won’t crack or break if dropped and never needs refinishing. Plus, no tools are required to remove or install the grips.

Currently available are models for the Colt .45 Auto, Ruger Security Six (with serial No. 151 and above), S&W “N” frame and S&W “K” frame. But Mustang is adding additional models as fast as the tooling can be completed, so if you’re interested write for more information and a free color brochure to Mustang Pistol Grips, Dept. SOF, 1334 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, CA 92805.

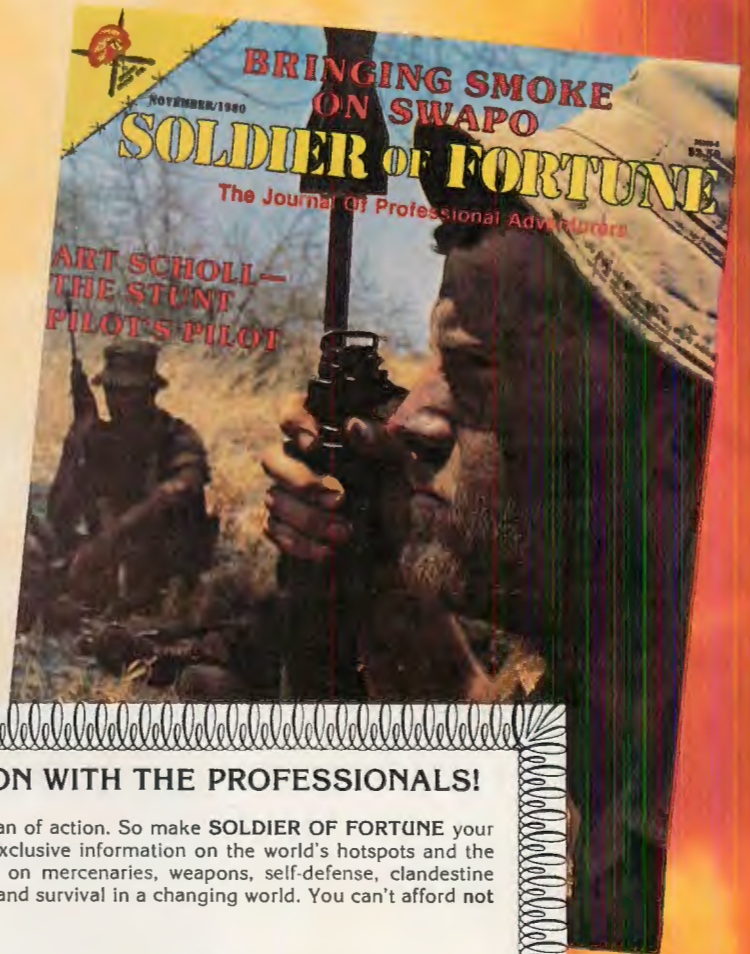
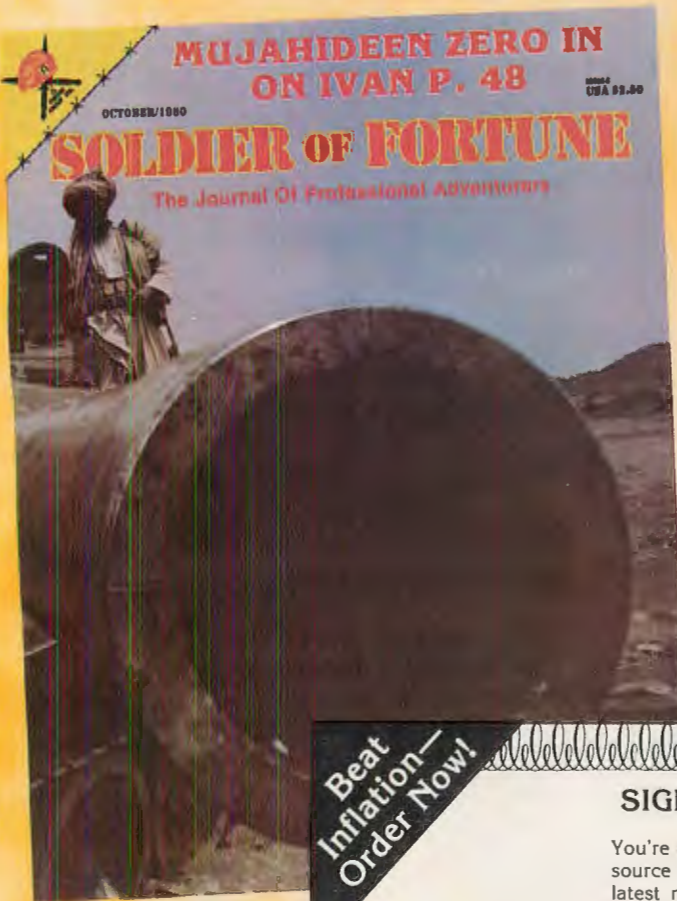


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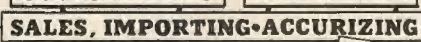
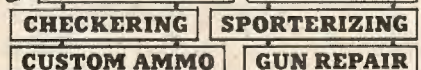
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## COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

*Continued from page 13*

Bill Wilson, Dept. SOF, 101-103 Public Square, Berryville, AR 72616, is now converting the Laka No. 777 magazine to hold seven rounds. He has also installed a pad on the bottom for fast reloading. The modified Wilson-Laka No. 777 magazine is sold by Wilson's Gun Shop for \$18 each. I have three that I use as match magazines, and they are the finest that I have ever come across.

**M**ANY custom pistolsmiths offer extended-recoil-spring guides for the 1911 pistol. Some shooters swear by them, others swear at them. An extended-recoil-spring guide adds weight to the front of the gun to reduce muzzle jump slightly. Personally, I do not use them. If you feel you need such an extra, then one of the best-made extended-recoil-spring guides available comes from D.B.P. Engineering, Dept. SOF, 7821 Willow St., New Orleans, LA 70118. D.B.P.'s Dave Poynter tells me that they make these guides and mated recoil-spring plugs for the standard Government Model Colt as well as Commander-length guns. They plan to offer a longer version for the six-inch-long .45 auto slides. If you wish to try one of these units, contact the firm at the above address.

In the near future, Gil Hebard Guns, Dept. SOF, 125-129 Public Square, Knoxville, IL 61448, will offer these D.B.P. custom extended-recoil-spring guides. In theory, a recoil-spring guide in the 1911 auto keeps the recoil spring from kinking during the slide's recoil stroke. When the spring is compressed in a straight line, smoother functioning results. Also, the extended rod helps the slide return to battery the same each time the action cycles.

The drawback lies in the fact that disassembly becomes more difficult. Also, the pinch method of loading or checking the chamber on a 1911 auto becomes impossible.

**A** new monthly publication for the combat shooter is now available from *Combat Shooters Report*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 626, Sioux City, IA 51101. This monthly provides information on IPSC shooting events and activities in the U.S. Headed up by the new U.S. IPSC regional director, Jake Jatras, this publication does a fine job of keeping readers informed on the latest match results around the country, as well as giving news of IPSC shooting events in the United States. I highly recommend that all shooters interested in the IPSC and combat-shooting game subscribe to the *Combat Shooters Report*. Also part of the CSR format is a regular update on various products suited to the practical-shooting sport.

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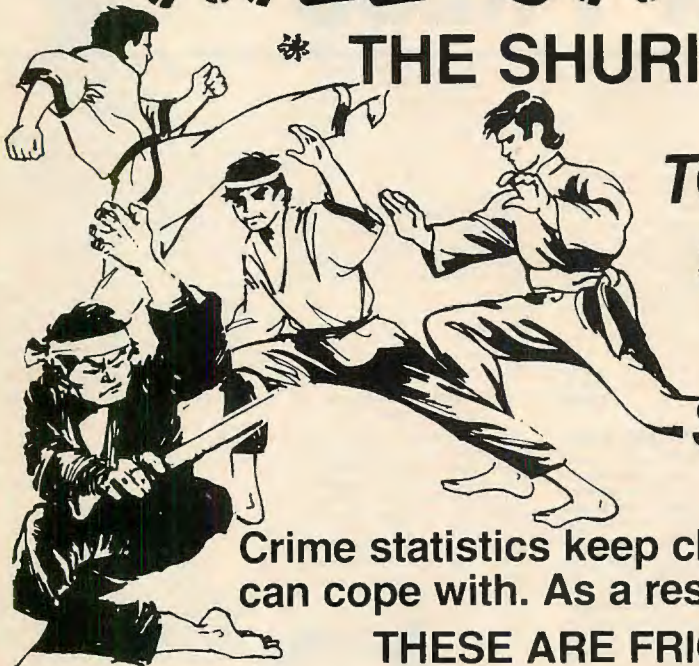
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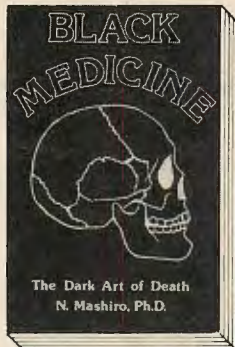
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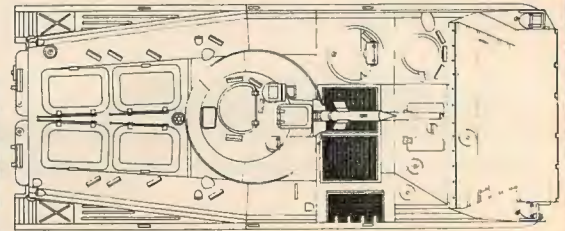


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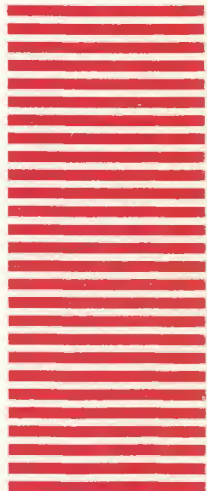
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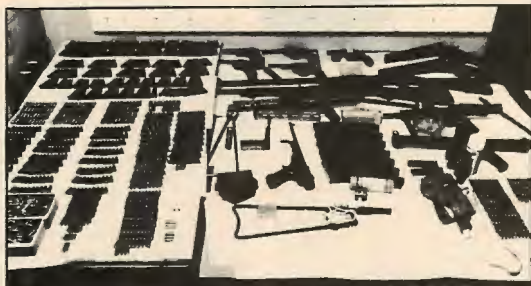
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text by Karl Schuon

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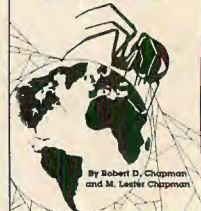
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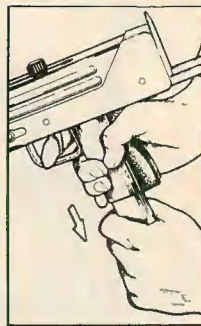
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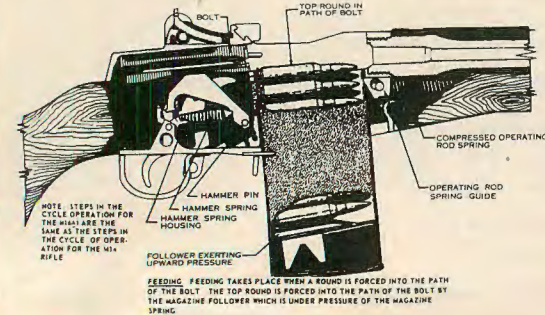
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# IN REVIEW

**U.S. NAVY WAR PHOTOGRAPHS: Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay.** Edited by Edward J. Steichen; text by Tom Maloney. Crown Publishers Inc. 1980. 128 pp, 115 black-and-white photos. \$6.95 paper; \$12.95 cloth. Review by Bob Poos.

**H**ERE is a book which once sold six million copies in one year and almost immediately became a collectors' item. Now it is being re-issued in improved form.

Edited by former Navy Capt. Edward J. Steichen — one of the foremost photographers of our time — it is a collection of the best war photos taken by the Navy Photographic Unit in WWII.

First published in 1945 as a commemorative for the American fighting men of that conflict, it was priced at 35 cents — to break even and to make it available to all servicemen and former servicemen who wanted something to recall the days of their great adventure. It sold out as fast as the presses could print it.

Crown Publishing has now re-issued this original WWII classic, augmented with text by Tom Maloney, editor of *U.S. Camera* and one of those responsible for the initial book, and with some photos not included in the first edition. These include pictures by Steichen who, besides being one of the great photographers of the 20th century, is a former director of the Museum of Modern Art and author of the collection *Family of Man*. His service with the Navy photo unit helped produce a memorable photographic record of the war.

There is little to criticize about this volume. A master in his field, Edward Steichen is not likely to make many mistakes, particularly when it concerns something which he considered one of the most outstanding achievements of his lifetime — a lifetime already packed with outstanding achievements.

Photo quality and technique are magnificent, particularly considering that these pictures were taken with cameras that are museum pieces by today's standards.

Putting mere technical competence aside, this photo collection vividly brings to life once more what it was all about out there in the Pacific during WWII — everything from the vitality to the futility to the ultimate triumph.

Particularly effective is Steichen's occasional employment of startlingly contrasting photos on facing pages.

For example, pages 60 and 61. The first



page reveals the stark image of a Navy gunner. Dead. Slumped over the bulkhead of his guntub — arms dangling lifelessly down — his blood drying in long rivulets on the side of the tub. Opposite page — a smiling, scrubbed, clean-shaven submarine sailor hands a snapshot to his buddy in a bunk above him, probably from home. The fact that two spare torpedoes are lodged below the bunk is a grim reminder that a similar fate could befall these two.

And take pages 104 and 105. At left a Marine Corsair plunges in to unleash his five-inch rockets into Japanese defensive positions on Okinawa. From what former Corsair pilots have told me, that guy is probably having the time of his life. But at right, the Marine infantrymen below him are not having the times of their lives while digging fanatical Japanese defenders out of a cave near Naha.

Near the book's end, pages 122 and 123 clearly show who won this war — and how close the winners came to losing it. At left, behind barbed wire — heads bowed, hats in hand — a group of Japanese prisoners on Guam receives word in a broadcast from the Emperor that it is all over: Japan has surrendered. At right, laughing, yelling, American and British prisoners of war in Japan brandish U.S. and U.K. flags when they get word that the Allies have won and that the mighty U.S. fleet is approaching.

Production of this photographic record cost human lives. Men were killed taking these pictures, as illustrated by the stunning shot of a Japanese bomb exploding on the flight deck of the U.S. carrier *Enterprise* on 24 August 1942. The big E, the camera and the film survived. But the photographer, PhoM3/c Robert Frederick Read, USNR, did not.

What little text there is mostly concerns Steichen himself: how at age 63 he was appointed captain in the Navy — eventually to head up the photo unit. The prose by Maloney is lean and spare, yet his love and admiration for Steichen are clear.

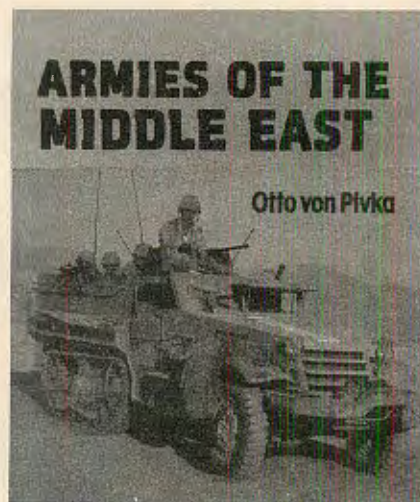
Maloney also explains in amusing detail how he and Steichen accomplished in six months the enormous task of putting together the material for the original book and managed to get six million copies run off at a cost of 35 cents each.

That was an incredible bargain then. And, even at its current cost, it still is.

*Bob Poos, a former Marine, is Executive Editor of SOF.*

**ARMIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST.** By Otto von Pivka. New York: Mayflower Books. 1979. Illus., maps, \$12.95. Review by Leroy Thompson.

**W**ITH the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the taking of the American hostages in Iran and the constant tension between Israel and the Arab confrontation states, no area in the world is of more interest to military analysts, professional soldiers or individuals interested in military affairs than the Middle East. Now, in *Armies of the Middle East*, a one-volume reference work is available which gives all salient facts about any of the potential combatants in this strategically important area. This latest work in von Pivka's series about armies of the world is perhaps the most valuable.



Its first portion puts the present conflicts in historical perspective. The four Arab-Israeli wars are covered, as are less-well-known conflicts like the Dhofar campaign in Oman or the Yemeni Civil War. Also included is an atlas of the Middle Eastern wars which, among others, includes excellent four-color tactical and strategic maps of the Arab-Israeli wars. This atlas alone would make this book an excellent reference work, but the volume's real "nuts and bolts" is the section entitled "National States and Their Armed Forces."

In this longest section in the book, each Middle Eastern state is evaluated on its military potential. From the largest, like Egypt or Iran, to the smallest, like Qatar or Bahrain, each is rated on the following: population, GNP, defense budget, air

force, navy, army, reserves, para-military forces, equipment, army uniforms and army history. Each area is covered quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Orders of battle and tables of organization are included, as are statistics on men, planes, tanks and other equipment available in each country.

In addition to the maps and charts, **Armies of the Middle East** contains a wealth of photographs of both men and equipment. Although most are in black and white, there are more than 20 color photos.

Facts of interest to professional adventurers in this work include information about which countries hire non-nationals in their armed forces and which countries are in the market for foreign advisers, officers and technical personnel. For example, about 50 percent of the United Arab Emirates' defense force is composed of foreigners — primarily Baluchis from Pakistan. In addition, some of the famous units formed and staffed by British officers are given good coverage, and anyone seeking information on the Arab Legion or the Trucial Oman Scouts can find it here.

Section four of this work covers weapon characteristics, and all of the weapons currently used in the Middle East — from small arms to armored vehicles — are discussed. Since virtually all modern U.S., British, French and Soviet equipment has found its way into the arms inventories of the oil-rich states, this chapter has reference value for those interested in the Middle East and in modern weaponry in general.

Since events in the Middle East affect events in the U.S. and since, if the U.S. does become involved in a land war within the next few years chances are it will be in this area, **Armies of the Middle East** could be one of the most important books written within the last few years. I recommend it highly and find that I consult my copy at least once every few weeks.

*Leroy Thompson is a frequent contributor to In Review, and is well qualified to review military texts. His background includes service in the USAF Combat Security Police in Vietnam and Thailand and graduate work in military history at London, Edinburgh and Oxford. He holds two master's degrees.*

*Thompson has been everything from a police officer and an industrial security chief to a bodyguard and a bouncer. Currently, however, he is a military-book dealer, and has also been quite successful as a free-lance writer.*

**STREET SURVIVAL: Tactics for Armed Encounters.** By Special Agent Ronald J. Adams, Lt. Thomas M. McTeran and Charles Remsberg. Calibre Press, 1521 Kirk St., Evanston, IL 60202. 1980. 403 pages. 410 photographs plus sketches. \$24.95. Review by Kurt Priebe.

MARCH/81

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### I. TACTICS FOR SURVIVAL

1. THEM AND US
2. CONFRONTATION
3. APPROACH TO DANGER
4. LIGHT CONTROL
5. VERBAL CHALLENGE
6. USE OF SURPRISE
7. COVER AWARENESS
8. SHOOTING TECHNIQUES
9. RELOADING UNDER FIRE
10. FINAL APPROACH
11. AFTER-BURN

### II. BASICS THAT STRENGTHEN TACTICS

12. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT
13. FIREARMS CONTROL
14. CLEANING
15. SERVICEABILITY CHECKLIST
16. PHYSICAL FITNESS

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*Continued on page 82*

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# 1980 ASSOCIATION OF THE U.S. ARMY CONVENTION

## New Weapons in Old New York

by Robert K. Brown



Of interest was what appeared to be binoculars , but in fact was a monocular — the other half containing a line-of-sight communication device. Item was one of a kind in U.S., as it is still in testing stage and made in England.



New Valmet Bullpup-design weapon, still in prototype stage, will be considered in 7.62 NATO and 5.56mm. Weapon has AK-type gas system incorporated into the Bullpup design. For further information contact: ODIN Int. Ltd., Dept. SOF, 818 Slaters, Alexandria, VA 22314.



Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, left, and Mack Gwinn, attended the AUSA convention in Washington, D.C., 13-15 October. Here they are shown displaying Gwinn's new muzzle brake, based on the AK-74 muzzle brake, and the 75-round drum magazine. Drum magazine will fit AR-15 and AR-180 series of weapons. Magazines and muzzle brakes for both the AR-15 and Mini-14 rifles will be available around March '81 from Phoenix, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.



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New Steyr GB 80 9mm pistol: 18-shot, double-action pistol with gas-delayed blowback action. Weapon has improved sight picture over the standard Colt and Browning fixed sights.



Cut-down Browning Fast Action, definitely only a concept at this time, but interesting. It has a ten-shot magazine and cut-down barrel and slide.

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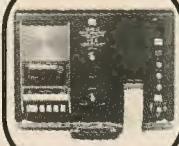
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# I WAS THERE

by Adam Novak  
as told to  
M.L. Jones

*Adam Novak was too young to fight in the Hungarian revolution of 1956, but his father commanded a platoon-sized unit of citizen soldiers.*

*Novak escaped to Austria after the revolution. He spent six months in a refugee camp in Trieste before receiving a visa to the United States. He is now a member of the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg, N.C. As he tells it:*

THE Hungarian revolution of 1956 was not a revolt by a small number of dissatisfied, militant citizens. It was a popular uprising in which all classes of the nation united against a foreign oppressor and its puppet regime. Workers, peasants, criminals, intellectuals, soldiers, students and vagrants fought shoulder to shoulder. Women carried ammunition to their husbands who served the mortars and machine guns that supported their sons. Those too old or too young to fight worked in field kitchens, in aid stations or as messengers. I was too young even for that, but I can see that time as clearly today as when it happened 25 years ago.

The area where we lived in Budapest was the scene of some heavy fighting. I particularly remember a battle between about 20 Hungarians and a Russian unit. Our street was long, without alleys opening into it and with a slight bend in the middle. I stood watching from a second-story window.

The Russians were slowly pushing the Hungarians back. The Hungarians leapt from doorway to wrecked car to rubble pile, firing with commendable efficiency. When they reached the bend, they were temporarily protected from Russian fire. Four of them stayed behind as a rearguard, while the others fled down the street to disappear into sewers, into houses and onto rooftops.

The rearguard was doomed, but their hearts were in the right place. Three of

them died at the bend, but the fourth, a big man wearing a worn leather jacket and a peaked cloth cap, seemed indestructible. His machine gun looked like a toy in his massive hands.

When he saw that he alone was left, he started retreating slowly, firing short bursts at the enemy. Bullets kicked up the dust all around him, but none found their mark. He took cover behind a large pile of rubble and loaded his gun with his last belt. Then he straightened up and cut down two Russians who were moving forward.

His gun jammed and, as he took cover to fix it, an armored truck, evidently called up by radio, careened past his position and cut off his retreat. Four riflemen and an NCO jumped out and covered him with rifles. The man tossed his useless machine gun aside, stood up, stuck his hands into his pockets and spat contemptuously. The NCO grabbed his arm, pushed him to the nearest wall, and I saw justice done — Red Army style.

The four riflemen lined up about four meters from the man. The soldiers in the truck looked over the side with great interest. Those the man had been fighting were also coming up to watch the show. To me, everything seemed to happen in slow motion.

The man took his hands out of his pockets and clasped them behind his back. The NCO yelled a command and the firing squad took aim. The man brought out a stick grenade, which he must have had concealed under his jacket, and lobbed it in a graceful arc over the heads of the firing squad into the truck. He was cut down before the grenade hit the floorboards, but nobody got out of the truck alive. Those who survived the explosion died in the flames when the fuel caught fire.

*If you have a combat or adventure story for "It Happened to Me" or "I Was There," triple-space type it and send it to SOF, P. O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, Attn: M.L. Jones. All stories should be 500 words or less. Upon publication, SOF will become owner of all publication rights. Submitted articles are subject to editing and revision, although their content and theme will not be changed. Photos (with captions and credits) are also helpful. Captions should be typed on a separate sheet of paper and keyed to each photograph. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope so we can notify you of acceptance or return of your story. Article payment is \$50, upon publication. All entrants will receive an SOF patch.*



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# Bungling British Mercs Muck Up Maldivian Maneuver

by Tony Geraghty

## OPERATION LAUREL & HARDY

*The following report, filed by its defense correspondent, appeared in London's Sunday Times on 4 May 1980. SOF reprints it with permission from the Times Newspapers Ltd. for your amusement.*

**A**N attempted coup d'etat by nine British mercenaries in the sensitive Maldivian Islands in the Indian Ocean, was afflicted by bungles which, according to one government source, made the operation "more Laurel and Hardy than 'Dogs of War'." One of the mercenaries served earlier under Col. Charles Beckwith, leader of President Carter's unsuccessful raid into Iran.

The men concerned are now back in Great Britain, some still unaware that they escaped arrest only by hours, or that a trap was set for some of them when they were expected to return.

The Maldivian Republic is a chain of islands which includes the former RAF (Royal Air Force) base at Gan.

Prompted by extensive *Sunday Times* inquiries in the Maldives and in Britain, the Maldivian president, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, confirmed that at least nine foreigners had been hired last February to mount a coup against him.

### Midnight Mishaps

The nine mercenaries involved are all experienced professional soldiers. Eight of them served with Britain's elite Special Air  
30 **SOLDIER OF FORTUNE**

Service. But their leader's plan — to make a surprise attack on the Maldivian military headquarters and armory at midnight — took no account of the fact that foreigners are not admitted to the Maldivian island capital of Male after 10 p.m. Furthermore, the headquarters' main gates through which the mercenaries, initially armed only with .22 caliber pistols, were to make their first assault — were always closed before midnight.

In spite of the scheme's comic opera qualities, it horrified British security services as well as the regular SAS Regiment, which is acutely embarrassed by unauthorized free-lance operations of this kind.

Since the British left the Maldives in 1976, the republic has been politically non-aligned. Soviet overtures for the Gan base have been politely rejected.

As one diplomat puts it, "At a time when both superpowers are fishing for more bases in the Indian Ocean, the last thing the West needed was an event which drove Maldivia into the other camp."

Records in Maldivia and the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo, where the mercenaries, using no aliases, left a well-marked trail, identify the team as Robert Wise, (former SAS NCO and briefly a Worcestershire Regiment second lieutenant); John Pace (unarmed combat instructor); RHS "Darkie" Davidson (former staff sergeant with a record of gallantry); Roger Blackman (former sergeant); Daniel



Oldham (ex-corporal); Kenneth Ovingdon (ex-corporal); Philip Sessarego (ex-corporal); Samuel "Paddy" Evans (ex-corporal); and Kevin Lyons (ex-Parachute Regiment corporal).

### Plots And Schemes

The plot was hatched last year, when team members were approached by Wise, Pace and a third man who dropped out of the scheme at the last moment. Initially, some of them told *The Sunday Times*, they were shown a simple sketch map of an island with only four guards. The fee, payable on completion of the contract, was \$25,000 per man.

After Christmas, Wise — then director of a legitimate security company — bought bulletproof vests which would have stopped nothing more than a .38 pistol bullet. Men of the Maldivian security service carry AK-47 Kalashnikov automatic rifles, whose 7.62mm rounds would penetrate the vests without difficulty.

On 13 January 1980, Wise's colleagues noted that he received a telephone call after which he announced: "We have a VIP security job in the Far East. I'll go away and do a 'recce.'" Male's immigration records show that Wise arrived in Maldivia on 23 January, apparently accompanied by another Englishman, and left next day.

Back in Britain, Wise discussed the contract with some of his fellow directors. Shown diagrams detailing the positions of sentries, and told that each sentry's rifle magazine contained only two rounds, they refused to have any part in the scheme.

The recruitment of the ex-SAS team was more successful. On 3 February, most of the strike force were collected from their homes and taken to Gatwick. Their bulletproof vests were in suitcases.

### Where's Male?

After they were airborne, Wise briefed



each man in turn. The destination, he said, was Male (of which most of them had never heard) and the objective was to take over the state armory and to seize President Gayoom before calling in his successor.

In Colombo, where the team was shepherded to the Blue Lagoon Hotel by a tall, well-spoken Englishman, the next five days passed pleasantly. Training was less strenuous than in SAS days. At dinner the team consumed an average of 15 bottles of wine.

From the Blue Lagoon, the team moved on to the Orient Pearl Hotel, where Wise gave a briefing and produced a sketch plan of the target which each man copied and memorized. Although the team would be armed initially with only .22 pistols, said Wise, the element of surprise would be with them. The position of each sentry, and his weapon, was carefully noted. (See plan.) A second target would be President Gayoom's residence about half a mile away.

**Plan of attack on security HQ and armory. From midnight rendezvous (1) team was to disarm four sentries, (2) then seize telephone exchange, command post (3) and armory (4).** They hoped 50 men in barracks dormitory (top left) would sleep undisturbed.

Maldivia is little over one hour away from Colombo by air. On their way to the airport, Wise stopped at a tourist office and showed some of the men a sack in a back office from which he produced an odd-looking silver cannister marked with a red line. It was, he said, a knockout gas. Nothing was said about gas masks for the attackers, from whom Wise had now removed even their bulletproof vests.

In the Maldives, the team made its base on one of the many holiday atolls, an island named Kurumba, about 15 minutes by boat from the capital of Male. There members were joined by their last recruit, Sessarego.

### No Valentine Massacre

The coup attempt was set for St. Valentine's Day, two days later, but the mercenaries rapidly concluded that if this was to be a second Valentine's Day Massacre, they were the ones most at risk.

The day after they reached the Maldives, the republic's foreign minister, Fathulla Jameel, was tipped off in Colombo about an "assassination" team recruited to kill him. This was a gross exaggeration, but an intensive security alert followed. The first visitor to come under scrutiny was Robert Wise.

He was not the only conspicuous visitor. The presence of a bunch of

brawny Englishmen, none accompanied by a wife, was causing comment among the German and Swedish families on holiday. The group's own reconnaissance also aroused some interest. In ones and twos, the mercenaries went for walks round the security HQ.

### Casing The Joint

One, chatting to a guard, put an arm round him while another mercenary prepared to take "holiday" snapshots. The "friendly" Englishman was about to take hold of the guard's Kalashnikov in a joking fashion (to assess how much ammunition it contained) when Wise, appearing on the scene, signalled him to desist. On Male's crowded quayside another mercenary expressed his opinion of local security arrangements in sonorous English, to the evident interest of local fishermen, until he was ordered to cool it.

As they gathered in Wise's chalet at Kurumba, it was apparent to the mercenaries that their initial intelligence was appallingly inaccurate. The sentries were changed frequently and were clearly alert. An office which should have held only two people was occupied by 25.

When, late in the proceedings, diving equipment was brought to Kurumba with tiny .22 pistols hidden inside air bottles, no one on the team was enthusiastic.

### Search And Desist

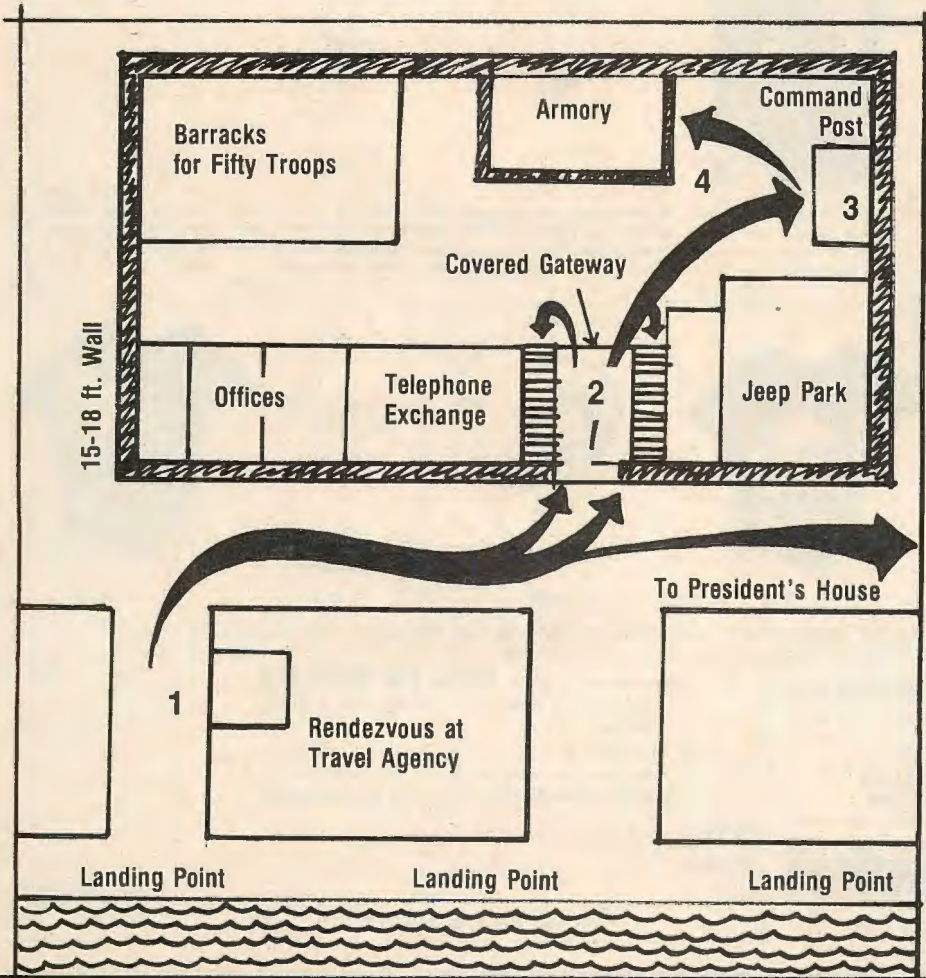
D-Day came and went. The next day, February 15, Wise set off for Colombo. His journey was eventful. By now, in the hunt for Jameel's "assassination" team, even a visitor's bag of Sri Lankan tea was searched. Wise, having cleared customs, was in the Maldivian departure lounge when pursuing security men — interrupted while they were at prayer — arrived at the airport island of Hulule by boat from Male. The flight was delayed while Wise and his baggage were rigorously searched.

That night he telephoned the Kurumba resort from Colombo and left a terse message with the manager, instructing "the other Englishmen" to join him in Colombo immediately. Wise, when they joined him, said nothing of his narrow escape. Back in England, a second attempt was planned.

When reservations were made for Wise to return from London to Colombo by way of Zurich with Davidson and Sessarego on February 27 — the aim was to mount a second attempt — the Maldivian government pointedly asked British, Indian and Sri Lankan authorities *not to impede* them.

"We wanted to talk to them," a Maldivian security officer said. Wisely, they stayed in England.

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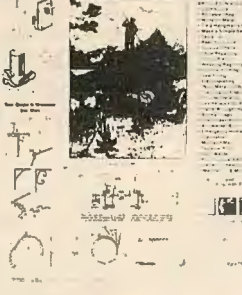
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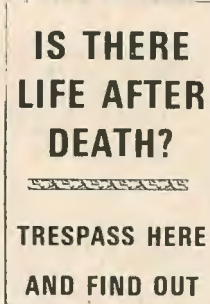
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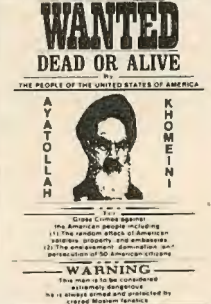
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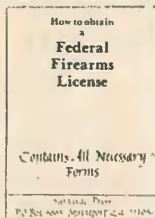


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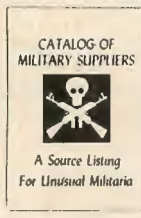


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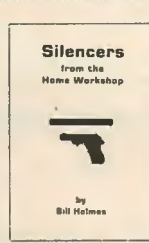
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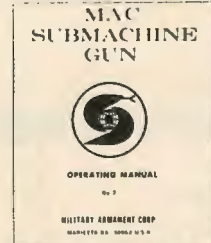
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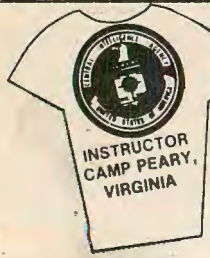
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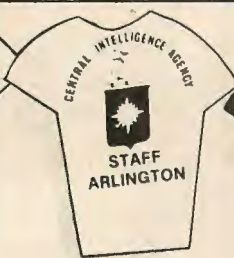
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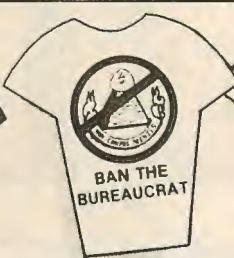
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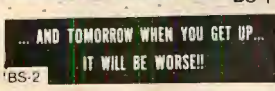


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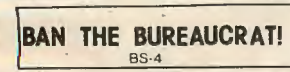
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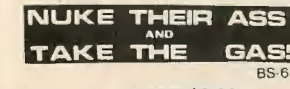
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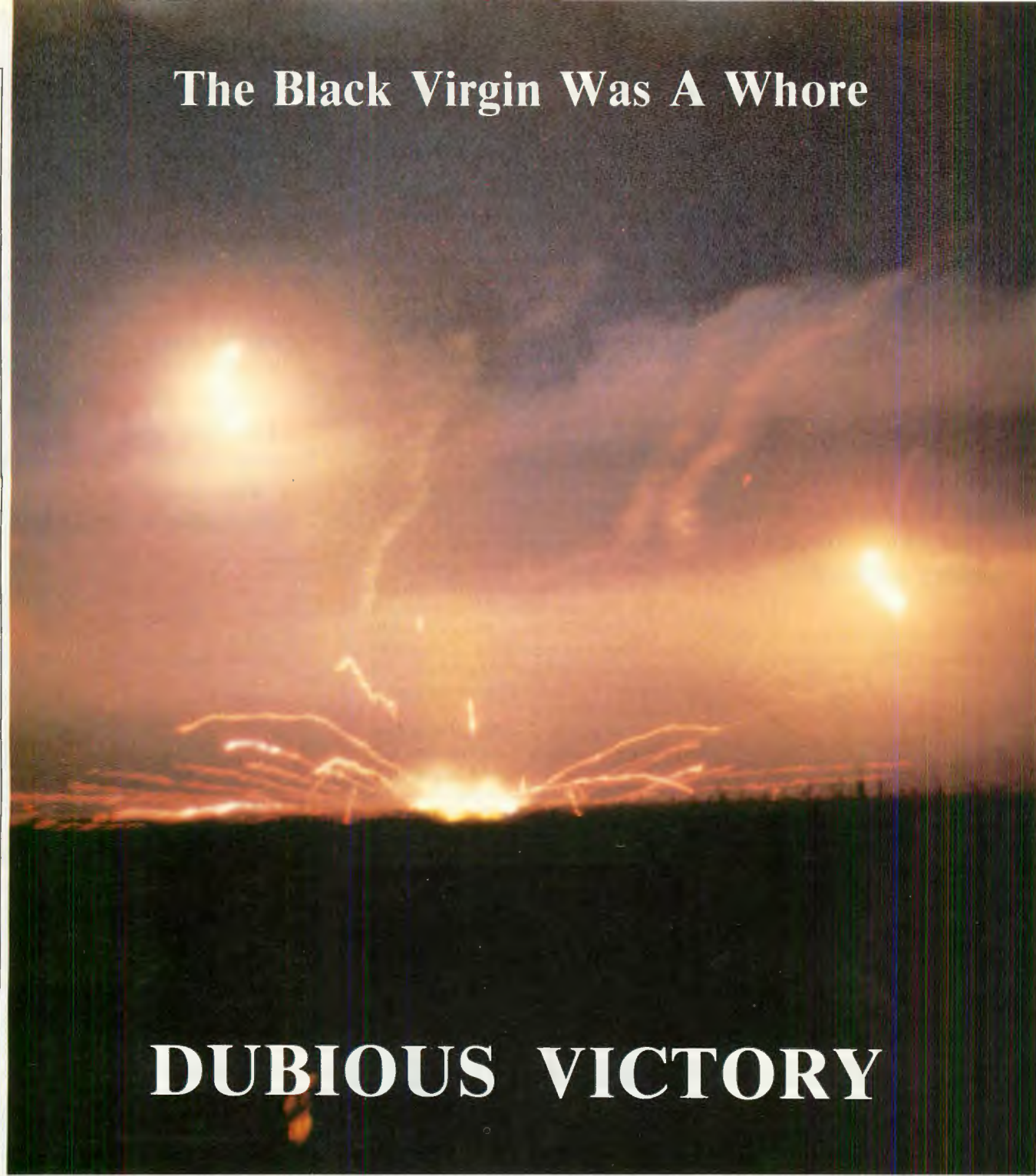
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# The Black Virgin Was A Whore



## DUBIOUS VICTORY

by Jeffrey Stephens

**N**OT too many clicks out of Tay Ninh Province stood the Black Virgin — a Viet Cong stronghold and one hell of a mountain. Jutting up from the surrounding canopy of dense jungle foliage and measured rows of rubber trees, it had been pounded by airstrikes, shelled by 175s and assaulted by ARVN ground troops. The damn thing was impregnable.

MARCH/81

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This is Jeffrey Stephens' second contribution to the pages of SOF (see "It Happened To Me," November '80). Stephens served as a sergeant E-5 Forward Observer with 1/5 Mechanized Infantry, 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam in 1966-67.

Says Stephens, "I've got 13 months of combat experiences to relate. Some are soft — others tougher." We're pleased to have been able to print two of them.

—C.E.D. Kite

The Virgin was also the site of one of the strangest covenants in Vietnam. Charlie was entrenched in a maze of tunnels and bunkers that ran throughout the mountain. A Special Forces team — monitoring enemy activity along the nearby Cambodian border — was dug in on the top. For two hours each day a bizarre truce went into effect. First the VC and then an American detail would hike the serpentine trail that led to the mountain's only clear-water spring. From this shared well the two groups would fill their five-gallon cans and hump them back to their respective camps.

### **Suddenly there was an explosion. The APC in front of us lifted onto its rear end like a dirt bike pulling a wheelie.**

At the end of the cease-fire it was business as usual. Charlie softened up the Special Forces enclave with a nightly mortar barrage and then sent out attack squads and snipers to probe the U.S. perimeter. The Americans reciprocated by ordering H&I fire from a nearby artillery unit and calling in Puff the Magic Dragon. And so it went.

Our outfit, the 5th Mech, was operating in the shadow of this magnificent trade-off. We were on an open-ended search-and-destroy mission. Our objective — a mythical VC base camp; a sprawling under-and-aboveground fortress rumored to straddle the Cambodian border — the imaginary line that couldn't be crossed, effectively stopping us from cutting off Charlie's supplies to the Tay Ninh region and beyond.

Our company, working in concert with other units in the division and elements of the 1st Air Cav, consisted of 15 APCs. The command track, platoon carriers, including two mortar tracks with mounted 81s, Zippo — a mechanized flame thrower that was little more than a manned Molotov cocktail — and an angel track completed the force. We weren't up to TO&E strength.

I'd always considered life in the bush an 80/20 blend of boredom and terror. After almost a month and a half of crossing and recrossing our area of responsibility we'd accomplished little. We'd discovered a small weapons cache, a long-deserted campsite, an aged bunker complex — but no enemy contact and no base camp. The operation was a yawn.

As a forward observer for the 81mm mortar, I carried my own PRC 25 radio and occasionally monitored the battalion frequency. Air traffic between our CO and above wasn't meant for the troops,

but listening in on the Old Man's frustration had become the highlight of my day.

"Son of a bitch, Charlie hasn't worked this area in months. Request permission to recon neutral territory."

The captain wanted to push into Cambodia. The Department of Defense had a different idea at the time.

It was the summer season and the hot damp air was difficult to breathe, adding to the company's general lethargy. As our line of APCs broke through a hedgerow into a large clearing, a huge crane spread its wings and slowly lifted into the sky. The heat affected everything in Vietnam — except Charlie.

I was an FO for the third platoon and normally rode in one of their tracks. Since the weapons-platoon lieutenant was new to the outfit and new to the country, the CO stuck me in his APC. My assignment was to help the lieutenant adjust.

Our first conversation told me more about the man than I wanted to know. He couldn't read a topo map, his specialty was the 106 recoilless rifle — a weapon our outfit didn't use — and this was his initial command experience. This rookie lieutenant, a Fort Ord OCS graduate, had no business in the same jungle with an infantry unit like ours.

I lay half asleep — wedged almost comfortably between the sandbags and dirt-filled wooden ammo crates strapped along the top of the APC — soaking up rays and listening to a Four Tops song on Armed



**Author defuses 155mm artillery shell set up as an anti-personnel or small land mine.**

Forces Radio. Inside the track a couple of the guys were swapping stories about a whorehouse in Cu-Chi, another was writing a letter, and the lieutenant was leafing through the bra, panty and undergarment section of a Sears catalog. For some reason the catalogs were as popular as *Playboy* or the pictures of Chris Noel in *Stars and Stripes*.

Suddenly there was an explosion. The APC in front of us lifted onto its rear end

like a dirt bike pulling a wheelie. It was our other mortar truck and the blast blew off the front drive wheel. The vehicle stopped and so did the company.

"Four six, four six, this is six X-ray. What is the extent of your damage? Over."

The lieutenant stared at me with vacant eyes — he didn't know what to do. I checked the downed track's status. The TC was bleeding from the nose and ears and looked as dazed as our young officer — but he had a reason.

"Six X-ray, this is four six X-ray. It ap-

### **Charred and broken bodies littered the clearing — the sound and smell impossible to describe.**

ears our four five track has hit a mine. We've got a Whiskey India Alpha and need an angel. Over."

"Four six X-ray, this is six X-ray, wait one."

A second blast, more shattering than the first, quickly clarified the situation. Up the line, another vehicle had taken a direct hit from an RPG-7 — the Russian-made recoilless rifle that could turn an armored personnel carrier full of soldiers into a steel casket of serrated shrapnel and pieces of burning body parts. We'd blundered into an ambush.

The company's reaction was automatic. The line of APCs swung toward the woodline and laid down a .50-caliber recon-by-fire that smoked into the trees at the far end of the clearing. Our 81 crews moved into action. We lined up the tubes, walked in a couple of white-phosphorous marking rounds and rained the woods with HEs. Considering the company had two vehicles down, our firepower was awesome.

With the woods softened up, the grunts un-assed their tracks. A second platoon APC didn't unload fast enough. Another direct hit left a lot of dead and wounded. The routine day along the Cambodian border had turned into a bloodbath.

As the guys spread out into the area, there was still no sign of Charlie. The CO frantically radioed battalion for a dust-off and Huey-gunship air support — against a force he couldn't identify. We didn't know if we were facing a squad or a division.

Our mortars had done all they could, so the crews set up security. Charred and broken bodies littered the clearing — the sound and smell impossible to describe. The CO ordered our lieutenant to run the

*Continued on page 66*

# MOROCCO'S MURDEROUS MARAUDERS

## Legion Renegade Led Rifs

by Robert Roman



Company of Moorish soldiers carrying muzzle-loading "jezails." Photo: Brown Bros.

**I**T was killing time in North Morocco. With great enthusiasm, the Rifian warriors burned their victims alive, buried them alive, pushed them off cliffs, cut their throats, hacked them into bloody fragments, impaled them on stakes, cut off their arms and legs or sawed them in two. The time period was the early and mid-1920s and the victims were the armies of Spain and France and their Foreign Legions.

Ironically, one of the few monuments to those mountains of corpses is a light operetta: Sigmund Romberg's *The Desert Song*, which Broadway and Hollywood immortalized and which has passed into musical folklore.

*The Desert Song* is, of course, almost pure show biz — 'almost' because there was a desert songster, if you can call him

that, and it was the operetta's Red Phantom who orchestrated much of that now-forgotten carnage. His name was Joseph Klems, aka El Hadj.

Romberg should have started his story at the turn of the century when France began to push deep into Morocco. In the north, the Spaniards watched enviously. They were confined to a narrow strip along Morocco's Mediterranean coast. Facing the Spaniards was a formidable barrier: the country of the Rif — hard, bleak mountains, sheer cliffs, peaks accessible only by barely discernible trails used by mountain goats — and Rifians, who were as hard as the country.

Rifians. Occasionally in history, you come across a breed of men of truly awesome lethality. The Vikings, for instance, or India's Thugees, Japan's ninjas, the

assassins of Arabia, the Huns, the Gurkhas. Such were the Rifians — before they burned themselves out.

A French officer wrote of them:

"They are magnificent fellows, these Berbers. They don't know the word 'surrender.' One of them will engage a whole patrol. I admire them and love them and I kill them on sight."

The Rifians are Berbers, not Arabs, and they claim a 10,000-year heritage in their flinty mountains. Many have green or blue eyes, red hair and freckles. It has been said of them that "they resemble nothing so much as Iowa farm boys." The resemblance ends with appearance.

In the Rif, a youth who had not killed a man was not considered fit to take a bride — so when a boy made his first kill it was cause for family rejoicing. Their slogan

was: "I against my brother, my brother and I against our cousins, my brother, my cousins and I against the world." Before foreigners were around to be killed, the Rifians slaughtered each other.

One feud took place just before the European invasions. It began when one village clan invited another to a neighborly get-together. During the festivities, a guest shot the host chief's dog. This annoyed the villagers, so they butchered 12 of their guests. In the feud that followed, scores of tribesmen were killed, then hundreds. The two clans virtually exterminated each other.

That sort of thing served to curtail population growth and the 65 Rif tribes never totalled more than about a half-million people. They subsisted on their goats and figs, about the only sustenance their barren land could support. Nevertheless, the French and Spanish powers began to eye the Rif with growing interest. Apart from the fact that there is no accounting for taste in colonies, the Europeans suspected that such a godawful place must have something going for it. Gold maybe, or other minerals. In the first years of the 20th century, the French and Spanish began to push into the Rif's foothills. Fighting steadily became more intense.

## Rolling Up The Spanish Front

In July 1921, the Rifian warlord Abd el Krim united the tribesmen and hurled them at a Spanish column advancing on his stronghold. The Spaniards, including their commanding general, were obliterated. The Rifians then proceeded to roll up the entire Spanish front in a series of lightning assaults. Thousands of Spanish



Infamous Rif leader, Abd el Krim.  
Photo: Wide World

troops were chewed up by the Rifian killing machine. Thousands more were captured and disposed of by the grisly methods mentioned earlier. If the Spaniards were lucky, like the garrison at Ourtzagh, they were merely thrown off the surrounding cliffs. If not, the Rifians went through their usual routine of gouging out eyes, hacking off hands and so forth.

In one week, the Rifians drove all the way to the Mediterranean coast, penned up the Spanish remnants in two small seaports — then stopped fighting. A force

of 5,000 Rifians — some say 3,000 — had virtually destroyed an army of 45,000 Europeans. At the moment of final victory, when they could have driven the last Spaniards into the sea, the tribesmen simply melted away.

The reason? Various esoteric explanations have been offered, such as that Abd el Krim wanted to avoid total war with Spain, or that the Rifians wanted to leave a few Spaniards in the area because they were such fun to kick around. The real reason was that the Rifians were just about the ultimate example of a "citizen army." Throughout his campaigns, Abd el Krim could oblige his tribesmen to spend only one week per month in the field, and never more than 15 subsequent days. These warriors would go on a seven-day spree of mayhem and murder, then trot happily back to the old mud hut and the goats.

Very unprofessional, true, but the system worked, like just about everything else in the non-existent Rifian Table of Organization. The warriors fought with rifle and bandolier. They carried a waterbag, a few dried figs and a loaf of bread. No man was without a dagger, and their skill in the use of edged weapons made them as lethal as rifles. In making a strike, the tribesmen would routinely jog 30 miles or more at night over mountain trails, and would still be in shape for the dawn's killing.

## New Tactics And Technology

But changes were taking place in the Rifian forces; a new dimension was being added: European-style tactics and technology wedded to traditional tribal war-

French troops advancing on Morocco. Photo: Brown Bros.



fare. This was dramatized early in 1924. A group of foreign journalists made their way to Abd el Krim's mountain stronghold and were invited to observe his personal guard unit pass in review. What the reporters saw was a force of uniformed troops *goose stepping* past with Germanic precision.

This observation was not lost on the French, who were already reeling from the Rif's fury. Abd el Krim's warriors had boiled out of their mountains and swooped down on the French colonial army and Foreign Legion. The French, who had been rather contemptuously watching the Spaniards' rout, were also caught off guard. The Rifians overran a chain of French forts and stabbed into French Morocco.

"The brutal fact is," warned France's Marshal Petain, "we have suddenly been attacked by the best-armed and most powerful enemy that we have ever encountered in the course of our colonial operations."

The French poured in some 200,000 troops to face a foe who could rarely send more than 5,000 men into combat at one time and place.

Despite the odds, despite the fact that the Rifians were now in total war against both France and Spain, they remained curiously unimpressed. Abd el Krim explained his complacency:

"A Rifian is worth 10 Frenchmen and more. Why? Because two or three out of that 10 will be sick or exhausted from the climate and terrain. Four others will be immobilized guarding roads, convoys and defensive positions. That leaves three fighting men out of 10 — and they will be heavily laden with the wrong equipment

and trying to operate in country about which they know nothing."

## Enter El Hadj

Maybe so, but even if one accepts Abd el Krim's "10 Frenchmen" figures, a lot of Frenchmen still remained. But the warlord of the Rif seems to have had enormous confidence in his new chief of staff, El Hadj.

Long before the Rifian invasion, the French had been aware of a mysterious enemy operating in the interior's desolate mountains and deserts. Ambushed soldiers had been found with cards pinned to their uniforms bearing the name El Hadj. El Hadj's calling cards had been found in destroyed Legion outposts and on the desks of French fort commandants — a legend was born.

The goose-stepping parade at Abd el Krim's headquarters electrified the French authorities. El Hadj's presence there had long been rumored. Could he be a German secret agent? Is it an international conspiracy? Journalists and intelligence services alike began to feverishly debate the question: Who is El Hadj? One reporter, Vincent Sheehan, solved the problem neatly: he went into the Rif and asked El Hadj himself.

Sheehan was probably the first correspondent to get the story. He made his way to Abd el Krim and succeeded in interviewing El Hadj, who turned out to be a swarthy, black-bearded, dark-eyed individual clad in Arab dress. But he was no Arab. Nor was he a secret agent. It was Joseph Klems, and he was a deserter from the French Foreign Legion. Now he was Abd el Krim's chief of staff and personal secretary.

Sheehan sized up Klems as being "kind-hearted, sentimental, romantic — and capable of unlimited ferocity in organized combat."

That is the image which became permanently associated with The Desert Songster. It is not entirely false nor is it completely valid. Klems was undoubtedly a tough fighter and he was certainly a romantic — so much so that most of the stories about him were liberally laced with romantic fiction.

Klems said he was born in Dusseldorf in 1885. He ran off to Paris with a beautiful actress in 1907, he said, "to evade military service." The couple set up housekeeping briefly, then the girl left him. Klems went to Istanbul where he got a job with an import-export firm. He then gave a vague account of wandering about in Iran and Afghanistan for nearly five years during which time he somehow amassed a fortune. In 1911 he returned to France and promptly lost all his money in a gambling spree at Monte Carlo. For almost a year he drifted around France, "living by my wits." In 1912 he turned up in Morocco and joined the French Foreign Legion.

One of the few established facts about Klems' early career is that he did indeed leave Germany in 1907, but he left because he was a semi-professional burglar wanted by the police. What he actually did for the next five years was never clear. He did join the legion in Morocco in 1912.

Klems was a good legionnaire. He had a nasty temper and made no secret of his loathing for the French. But he was tough, competent and did his job well. The legion asked for no more and Klems

*Continued on page 60*



# SILENT ENEMY

## Hot Tips For Cold Weather

by Bill L. Boggs

**T**HE enemy — silent, relentless, ever present, unforgiving. It sapped the fighting strength of Napoleon's army, brought the German army to a standstill on the Russian front and disabled a significant portion of American troops in Korea. Combat places immense stress on the individual and, most certainly, his leadership capabilities. Many of America's finest young leaders overcame stressful situations and survived to give an admirable account of their deeds. Yet when faced with the silent enemy — cold weather — these same competent young leaders have faltered and, in some cases, failed.

### Breakdown

Twice when participating in cold-weather exercises with American and international troops, I have witnessed young officers, who have all desirable combat skills, rendered completely helpless because of the cold. Young officers, normally good leaders, sat by themselves staring blankly into space, seemingly unaware of their responsibilities. On occasion, cook fires were allowed to burn themselves out because individuals were unwilling to move the necessary 25 yards to carry more wood to the fire.

One Army unit in Alaska experienced almost complete breakdown in effectiveness when the battalion's officer staff remained inside their shelters for long periods of time, disregarding their troops. With lack of supervision and the effects of cold, unit integrity dissolved.

As assistant director of operational medicine at the Naval Health Sciences Education Training Command in Bethesda, Md., my job was to evaluate the capabilities of the Navy Medical Department to support the U.S. Marine Corps in

cold-weather combat operations. We felt that with our NATO commitments, the potential for a Navy support role in winter combat was very real. The task required not only an evaluation of our present capabilities but — in order to build a firm data base — a long, critical look at the Marine Corps' long-range, cold-weather requirements. We evaluated U.S., Russian, Canadian and Scandinavian cold-weather systems.

### Cold Weather Research

For two years, I focused on all phases of cold-weather operations: training of medical and combat troops, medical evacuation (a most critical problem), combat techniques and, above all, evaluation of current-issue cold-weather equipment. There are volumes written on cold-weather medicine — frostbite, chilblains,

hypothermia, dehydration and snow blindness. Knowledge of cold injuries is of paramount importance to the combat leader, but the true medical treatment of these injuries is best left to competent medical practitioners.

### Prevention As Cure

The focus of this article is to direct the combat leader to those potential problem areas over which he can exert control. In a sense, that time-worn phrase sums it up — an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure — and in the case of cold-weather operations, prevention is indeed an achievable goal.

The opinions expressed herein are the result of my two-year field study with Canadian forces in Canada; U.S. Marines at Fort Drum, N.Y.; Mountain Warfare Center, Bridgeport, Calif.; NATO operations in Norway and an in-depth role as a leader in cold-weather training with the United States Navy at the Outward Bound School, Leadville, Colo. (See "Upward Bound," SOF, December, '80.)

Irrespective of his nationality, one overriding concern preoccupies the combat leader's mind: equipment. Individuals must keep in mind that there are two distinct batteries of equipment — equipment obtainable through various mountaineering-supply stores, whose high technology means high cost; and that which is available to the average grunt through his supply officer. The two are in conflict.

But the reality of the situation is that the U.S. government has vast stockpiles of cold-weather equipment and, until it can be proven that this equipment is incapable of supporting a fighting force, it will be used in a most cost-effective man-

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SOF introduced Bill L. Boggs to its readers with "Upward Bound" (December '80). When we accepted his article on his unit's experience at the Colorado Outward Bound Mountain Center at Leadville, we asked for a follow-up article, giving an overview of problems and possibilities for military cold-weather operations.

Boggs' second article arrived as we prepared this issue for publication. As soon as we read it, we immediately reserved space for it in the magazine, since we knew Boggs' in-depth evaluation and practical suggestions would provide invaluable information for our readers.

—M.L. Jones





Building an igloo takes time and practice but completed structure gives excellent protection. First, snow must be packed down. Second, cut snow blocks with large knife or snow saw (left).



Build walls, being careful to overlap individual blocks for strength.



As roof nears completion walls narrow in. Mountaineering stores carry instruction books.



Layering — using several lightweight layers of warm clothing — provides most effective cold-weather protection.







**ABOVE:** When cooking, place stove out of direct air in cook hole for best use. Remember to place insulating material under stove to prevent snow melt. Photo: Bill L. Boggs. **RIGHT:** End your day early when winter camping — especially if you plan to build a snow-block shelter, as pictured. When doing heavy work, remove outer clothing layers to prevent later chill from sweat-soaked garments. Photo: Colorado Outward Bound



ner. Special units such as SEALs and Special Forces often use specialized, high-quality, high-technology, commercially available mountaineering equipment. Average grunts and line infantrymen assigned to a cold-weather area are stuck with using the same equipment that was issued to their fathers in Korea.

### Southern Exposure

The American fighting force is, for the most part, a warm-weather fighting force — due to our experience in Vietnam. A significant amount of Marine Corps enlisted men come from the southern parts of the United States. Their cold-weather experience is limited.

One thing is certain, however: cold climates put an increased demand upon every facet of the fighting unit — not only upon the physical well-being of the troops, but also upon the equipment and tools they use to complete their mission.

Wet and dry cold: Prior to any meaningful discussion of cold-weather operations, a clear understanding of the difference between wet and dry cold is necessary. In most people's minds, dry cold is associated with the western U.S.

and wet cold with the eastern U.S. However, as long as the temperature in either climatic region stays well below freezing, a dry-cold environment exists.

As the temperature of the air increases, its capacity to hold moisture also increases. Once the temperature rises to near freezing and above, operational problems increase dramatically. Above freezing (32-degrees Fahrenheit), snow turns to rain, fallen snow to slush, tundra to marsh and frozen earth to mud.

The problems of troop and vehicle movement under these circumstances should be evident. However, the clothing problem, which directly affects unit performance, is not as evident — wet clothing allows the evaporation process to speed up, rapidly lowering body tempera-

Natural shelters boost winter survival odds. This lean-to is constructed from evergreen limbs. Photo: Bill L. Boggs



ture. The lowering of body temperature, if unabated, is a bonafide medical emergency of very serious proportions called hypothermia.

## Footgear (Wet Cold)

Perhaps no single piece of equipment creates the amount of controversy that footgear does. During WWII, it became apparent that issue leather boots were inadequate for fighting in a cold, wet environment. Dug into trenches with four to six inches of standing water during a period of time when the temperature hovered around freezing, GIs began to experience frostbite, trench foot and chilblains.

Line-unit fighting effectiveness dropped drastically. Once the leather boots soaked through, they never dried. To compound the problem, under fire it was difficult to change to dry socks, resulting in costly manpower loss.

To offset this, a new boot was developed for the fighting man in Korea. Now dubbed the "Mickey Mouse" boot, this new footgear solved the problem. Made of rubber, with thick soles of insulating foam, these boots kept cold dampness out and retained body heat for warmth. Presently, these boots are issued in two versions: black for dry cold and white for wet cold. The valve on the outside of the boot — when opened — prevents pressure build-up due to movement.

As good as these boots are — and they are very good, as we found out in Colorado, Fort Drum and Alaska (in fact, civilians using this gear in a recent winter climb of Mt. McKinley suffered absolutely no foot injuries), they have one major problem: they seal moisture in as well as out. After wearing the boots for a long period of time, especially when engaged in strenuous physical activity, the interiors become sweat-soaked. True, the feet stay warm, but body tissues immersed in perspiration over a period of time degenerate. This is also a prime environment for bacteria to grow in, compounding the problem.

The solution: constant monitoring by noncommissioned officers to assure that the troops keep their feet dry. This is standard procedure now during winter operations. Each trooper should enter the field with enough socks to always have at least one pair of dry socks available.

The best bet is to wear two pairs of socks: one light pair of nylon socks underneath and a pair of heavy wool socks on top. Remember — wear wool, not heavy cotton, because wool will retain heat even when wet. Foot powder is fine to use, but caution must be exercised because too much foot powder, when moistened by sweat, becomes a paste that clogs the fabric of the socks, decreasing their insulating value.

One final note of caution: Mickey Mouse boots are useless in wet cold if they

are ripped or torn. The rubber, while durable, can be ripped or slashed. Also, the original general issue is the best bet. Buy them from a military surplus store. Beware of cheap imitations being sold as the genuine article.

Mickey Mouse boots will work well with snowshoes — either the traditional ash-and-rawhide ones or those with the new aluminum frames supplied to Marine Corps units. They do not work with cross-country skis; skiing requires a completely different type of footgear. Don't be fooled by pictures of troops skiing on military skis with Mickey Mouse boots. Those days are over.

## Footgear (Dry Cold)

If the temperature remains below freezing, footgear is not as great a problem. The Norwegian army believes that the low, lined ski boot made of reindeer leather is ideal for their use. During the Outward Bound Marine Corps operations in Colorado, a number of the instructors wore low ski boots, particularly when cross-country skiing, with no ill effects.

It is also felt that the new general-issue mountain boot made by Chippewa is a serviceable, lightweight footwear suitable for dry cold. This certainly would present a reasonable alternative to Mickey Mouse boots, which are heavy and cumbersome. Leather boots must be constantly treated with a water repellent substance to keep the feet dry. The U.S. Marine Corps at Fort Drum found that Snow Seal® works best and, since it has a silicone base, no damage is done to the leather regardless of the tanning process.

## Outer Garments

Current mountaineering clothing is light, expensive, technically advanced and — depending upon the manufacturer — well made and efficient. In fact, most of the things that cannot be said in favor of general-issue clothing apply to this new clothing.

Instead of going into a treatise on the cost-effectiveness of general-issue as opposed to commercial equipment, I prefer to spotlight some GI equipment that is worth procuring for private use.

The first step, however, will be to establish some firm guidelines from which to judge any article of clothing and to develop a sensible approach to staying warm and alive.

## Wool For Warmth

Forget cotton outer garments. *Wool is the word.* Wool retains its insulating properties even when wet and it is durable. Wool pants of commercial or GI issue are good buys. Wool shirts, sweaters and socks are ideal. (Remember: all wool — not synthetic blends.) Older, issue wool garments are usually very good buys.

Whether you are active duty or civilian, wool is the way to go.

The typical Marine in a cold environment will wear cotton issue longjohns, a wool shirt, wool sweater, field jacket with liner, arctic parka with fur-lined hood, fatigue pants or, if available, wool pants, cold-weather trousers with nylon-pile liners, two pairs of wool socks, Mickey Mouse boots, wool gloves, a leather shell and arctic mittens. These mittens are extremely difficult to manipulate and are generally worn only when in a stationary position.

Marine equipment offers little protection against wet cold, particularly in an area where the temperature may rise above freezing for short periods of time. The inadequacy of ponchos, for example, became glaringly evident when a U.S. Marine Corps patrol at Fort Drum was caught a number of clicks from base camp during a temperature rise; rain fell, the troops were soaked, and then the temperature dropped, freezing their clothing. Their ponchos, being cape-like in design, proved all but useless against the wind-driven winter rain.

Fortunately, no casualties occurred, as the troops beat a hasty retreat back to base camp. However, had they been pinned down under fire in combat, the results might have been tragic.

## Down To Down

Down parkas, jackets, vests and sleeping bags are excellent investments — but expensive. Given proper care, they are not as fragile as they seem. Good, expedition-quality down garments can last many years if treated properly. Military-issue arctic parkas, made of cotton and synthetic blends, are cumbersome and heavy, but durable. Civilian down parkas are far lighter and have the distinct advantage of freeing the upper body for quick movement.

Faced with a choice of outer garments, I would choose goose down first and a synthetic fiber (fiber-fill II and hollow fill) next. Synthetic fibers have one primary advantage other than lower cost: they will insulate when wet. Down lumps up and is of no value when wet, but synthetic garments may be worn if the water is squeezed out. So if wet cold is anticipated, synthetic is a better value, and synthetic-fiber garments weigh only a little more than down.

## Goretex®

Outer garments of Goretex® are coming of age and, thanks to new technology, are rapidly cornering the market in clothing design. The outdoor industry has made use of this material in designing rain gear and outer garments. Goretex® repels rain and snow melt but allows water vapor from the body to pass through, so that even while active one stays dry and warm.

Its drawback is cost. Also, under heavy use, the Goretex® laminate may wear off. The newer processes are more durable — so go with a reputable manufacturer.

It would be impossible to issue the average line unit this type of equipment, due to cost. Another drawback in Goretex® clothing comes from the present industry trend to make it in bright colors.

Dark greens and blues should be available, however. A dark green with a surplus white arctic camouflage outfit would probably be the best bet for the civilian or special-warfare group.

## Layering

Perhaps the most important concept in utilizing clothing in a cold-weather environment is the layering principle. Rapid cooling of the body can precipitate hypothermia (lowered body temperature). The U.S. Marine Corps instructs its units entering cold climates to use layering when on patrol or engaged in heavy physical activity.

By dressing in layers — i.e., by using a number of lighter garments instead of one or two heavy ones — the individual can peel them off as his body temperature increases. As the temperature drops, he adds additional layers. Between each layer of clothing, a layer of insulating air is trapped to increase body warmth.

## Ventilation

Individuals engaged in intense physical activity perspire, soaking clothing and speeding up the cooling process. It is far better to remove a layer or two of clothing to keep the body cool and to prevent perspiration than to remain warm and risk sweat-soaked clothing. This practice is termed *ventilation*.

It is not unusual to see troops entering the morning chow line wearing every item of clothing they own and then taking everything off after moving around for a short time. Discourage this practice — individuals should never wear more clothing than is necessary to stay warm. The relationship between proper clothing layering and ventilation and the prevention of hypothermia cannot be overemphasized.

## Weapons

To the unit functioning in the field, perhaps nothing is more important than the effect of cold weather upon weapons: it causes normal lubricant to freeze.

At Fort Drum, it was Marine Corps policy to **completely strip** all small arms of lubricant prior to entering the field. In cases where lubricant was left on moving parts, primarily with M16s and M60 machine guns, malfunctions did occur. In fact, the M60 frequently failed, making malfunction the order of the day at times. The M16 functioned reasonably well if stripped of lubricant.

I am reluctant to strip my weapon completely of lubricant. My personal sidearm is a .45 ACP lightweight Colt Commander with a complete combat-accuracy job and a set of Bomar adjustable sights. Rather than strip this expensive firearm of its lubricant, I use dry graphite instead. I have experienced no malfunctions.

## Shelters

Setting up sleeping accommodations in a cold-weather operation consumes an excessive amount of time. It certainly consumes a lot of mental energy and — depending upon the expertise of the troops — physical energy as well.

During the Colorado Outward Bound School course, students found that in a tight situation, all that is required to sleep comfortably in dry cold is a warm sleeping bag. A number of zero-degree Fahrenheit nights were spent in the open with no shelter but a sleeping bag. Survival is possible in dry cold with a minimum of equipment.

Wet cold is an entirely different matter. Here, shelter plays a significant role in survival. At Fort Drum and in Canada, troops used squad tents with a cold-weather liner for their basic shelter. Since trucks moved the troops and the unit never ventured far from the road, this worked well.

Once the troops mastered moving the heavy tents by AKIO (small aluminum or fiberglass bath-tub-shaped sleds, pulled by one or two men) from the road to the shelter site (no small chore in three to four feet of snow) and mastered the skills of shelter erection, things went well. Heated by squad or Yukon stoves, these shelters were warm and comfortable.

However comfortable they may be, these shelters do not serve the needs of the mobile special-warfare groups. Shelters appropriate for this level of operation include:

1. Natural shelters:
  - Tree branch/windfall,
  - Snow trench,
  - Combination of tent fly, poncho and snow block,
  - Snow cave,
  - Igloo.
2. Commercial mountain tent.

The tactical situation will dictate the appropriate shelter to use, as will available shelter material. After spending considerable time building, using and teaching shelter construction, I have a few tips to help simplify this issue for the unit leader.

## Natural Shelters

Any unit entering a hostile winter environment should first know the basics of emergency shelter construction. In forested areas, use *windfalls* and cut branches.

During the Colorado Outward Bound

School course, two basic shelter systems were used and encouraged due to the need to travel lightly and rapidly: the *snow trench*, and the *tent fly* and *snow block*. The snow trench is essentially a 24-to-36-inch-deep trench covered with snow blocks or a nylon tarp. It can be used in deep snow, wet or dry. Once inside a sleeping bag and below the snow surface, heat retention becomes easier to control since you are out of the wind.

Understanding snow conditions is a science in itself. However, the bottom line is that snow is a good building material, especially in a cold, dry climate. The first step in building a shelter is snow preparation. The surface should be packed by tramping across it with snowshoes or skis. Once the snow consolidates or sits for 30 to 40 minutes, blocks can be cut with a large knife or snow saw.

*Snow caves* and *igloos* are warm and comfortable, but costly in terms of construction time, and they require skill to build correctly. Stop by a good-quality mountaineering store for instruction manuals.



## Tents

The current crop of mountain tents is excellent in terms of weight and stability under adverse conditions, but their use should be kept in perspective. They provide little insulation and they do not provide an environment for a good night's sleep. If a wind blows up — in the mountains it usually does — the nylon continually pops and cracks as the wind gusts.

## Sleeping Bags

The basic item used in conjunction with shelter is the sleeping bag. The general-issue cold-weather sleeping system is based upon three components: a feather-filled sleeping bag, a feather-filled outer bag and a cotton cover which snaps over the entire system. This system is effective, and unless conditions are truly severe, the outer bag is not necessary. (It should be noted that the choice between a single sleeping bag or a combination of bags depends upon shelter design and efficien-

cy. A sleeping bag in the open is less efficient, of course, than a bag in a shelter.)

The drawback to this sleeping system is the same as that of other general-issue cold-weather equipment — effective, but heavy and bulky. Mechanized units will find it more acceptable than small mobile units. Mobile units traveling on skis would be unnecessarily burdened. The newer, commercially available sleeping bags would be a better choice for them. The Navy Outward Bound system is based upon a down-filled inner bag and a synthetic-filled outer bag. The result is a lightweight, effective system.

If at all possible, a light-flannel sleeping-bag liner should be used to keep the interior of the bag clean. Body moisture and oils soil the bag, decreasing its insulating value.

## Transportation

Every military operation I was involved with always encountered the same problems moving troops across snow. Very simply, it boils down to this: no one walks

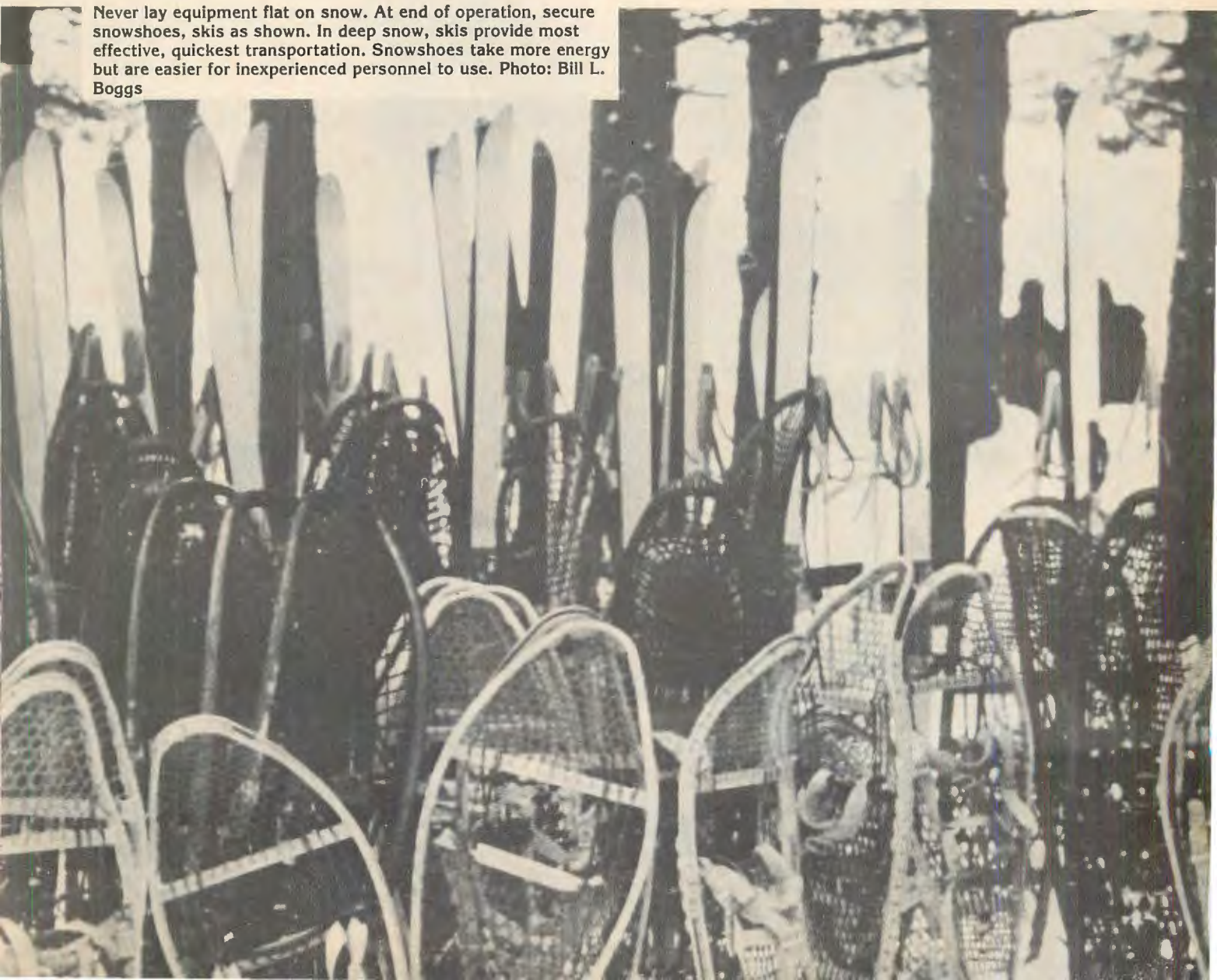
across three to four feet of snow effectively without mechanical assistance. The quickest, easiest method of moving troops is on snow shoes. The new aluminum variety are of excellent quality and they are sturdy and easy to use — much easier than the traditional rawhide-and-ash ones, which require skill and must be adjusted for top performance.

The aluminum-snowshoe bindings seem to give inexperienced troops the most trouble. For proper function, the shoe must pivot as it is raised in walking, thus allowing the tail of the shoe to drag. One obtains mobility by shuffling the feet rather than actually lifting the foot for each step. It takes training to use traditional shoes well.

The new aluminum shoes are easier to use since the foot drops into the proper position in the binding. Their construction, utilizing a steel rod as a pivot point, allows the entire shoe to pivot, the tail end to drop naturally and the shoe to track effectively. An added bonus to these shoes

*Continued on page 70*

Never lay equipment flat on snow. At end of operation, secure snowshoes, skis as shown. In deep snow, skis provide most effective, quickest transportation. Snowshoes take more energy but are easier for inexperienced personnel to use. Photo: Bill L. Boggs







# ESCAPE AND EVADE

Text & Photos by  
Al J. Venter

LEFT: South African AF Capt. Tinus van Rensburg.

RIGHT: Capt. Tinus van Rensburg, in borrowed flight suit, stands by SAAF Alouette III chopper.



## South African Scorpion Stings SWAPO's Pride

**C**APT. Tinus van Rensburg can't say exactly how it felt to have his chopper hit by a rocket in mid-flight, except that there was no apparent distinction between the blast and the explosion of his fuel tanks — both

happened simultaneously.

The way he describes it, he didn't even see the missile coming — apparently an RPG-7. One moment he was hovering at 30 feet — over a fairly large concentration of hostile SWAPO terrs in

Southern Angola — next he felt the heavy sensation of a bomb exploding, as he describes it, "somewhere next to my head."

In fact, the rocket hit the chopper engine to the rear, which absorbed much of the blast.

"It all happened so fast." A second later the cockpit of the South African Air Force Alouette III was full of smoke.

"I could feel searing heat at my neck and back through my helmet and flying jacket — it must have been intense.

"I looked out toward my right and saw billows of flame enveloping the entire aircraft." As he remembers it, the blast had also shattered the canopy and there were bits of metal and perspex all over the place. But, more importantly, the Alouette wasn't responding to her controls.

"I braced myself as I saw the earth rushing toward me; there was no time to execute emergency procedures. I just prepared for impact and took it for granted that the engineer was doing the same," van Rensburg says. He points out that he somehow managed to get the chopper to hit tail first, which absorbed some of the shock. "I can thank the Lord for that much," he adds seriously.

The terrorist group responsible for his crash was part of a force that the South Africans had followed from South West African territory — a force that had spent days terrorizing locals, attacking minor targets and laying landmines. A South

African patrol caught up with them shortly after they recrossed the Angolan border; choppers from 17 Squadron SAAF took over the chase not long afterward. Van Rensburg explains that the group they had followed in a "hot-pursuit operation" must have numbered about 100 men and included several vehicles painted in light camouflage.

"There was no mistaking who they were," van Rensburg recounts. "We were still beyond range of normal gunfire when they started firing; they let rip with everything they had.

"Then it happened. Everything this war had represented for me in the past suddenly became a nightmare; I was in the middle of it."

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### Thrown Clear — In A Hail Of Fire

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Although Capt. van Rensburg's chopper fell a relatively short distance, other helicopters circling the area were convinced that no one could have emerged alive from that mass of twisted metal, smoke and exploding flame.

They watched for movement in the immediate area of the crash and saw none.

What they didn't know was that van Rensburg had been thrown clear on impact and landed in the middle of an entire SWAPO section which had taken

up a defensive position against the pursuers.

When he came to seconds later, he was lying to one side of the burning chopper, his back contorted in pain and with nothing for defense but his hands. He was without his flight jacket or the 9mm Parabellum pistol he normally carried in a holster on his belt — it had apparently fallen out in the crash. There was also no hope of getting the automatic rifle he usually packed in the aircraft; it, too, had gone up in flames.

"I looked around me quickly. People were firing from a position close by and, noticing a truck about 10 yards to my left, I headed for it on my hands and knees, dodging the bullets that were thudding into the dry white Angolan sand around me."

Van Rensburg suddenly remembered his engineer, Koos Cilliers. He looked about him and spotted a cammie-clad figure in the dust a short distance away. He shouted at the man twice, then crawled to him, but the figure was lifeless. "There was a huge wound in his leg and I felt for a pulse — there was none." Cilliers was dead.

"Fire picked up around me and several rounds glanced off the body of the truck," van Rensburg continues. "I decided that the vehicle offered the best shelter until I could decide what to do. Twice I felt bullets rip through my flying suit, and once a tracer singed my forehead. I knew then that what I had

**While waiting for liftoff to pursue his story, author Venter photographs SAAF Engineer Heinz Katzke at controls and crewman of Alouette III.**

**Magaliesburg in perspective alongside two Alouettes in formation. The French-made choppers have proven themselves time and again to be as rugged and versatile as the country they patrol and defend.**





**Super Frelon chopper from sister squadron based at Swartkops during brush-fire operations.**

always dreaded was happening.”

A tracer ripped into one of the truck tires alongside him and he smelled burning rubber.

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### **AK Round Stopped By Book**

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Capt. van Rensburg didn't know it at that moment, but the small paperback novel that he had earlier zipped into one of the trouser-leg pockets of his flying suit had taken a direct hit from an AK round. Only later, when he reached safety, did he discover his luck. Had the book not been there, the round would have probably blown his calf away, making any escape attempt impossible.

By now his nose was bleeding profusely. He felt pain, but was not aware of the implications — in the crash his spine was injured — a double-compression fracture of the two lowest vertebrae.

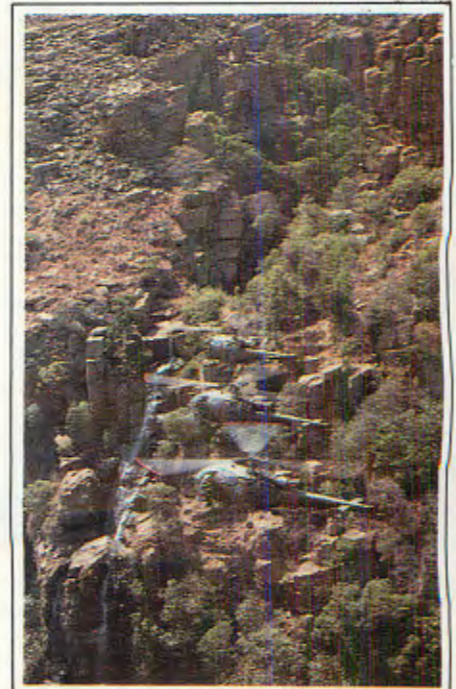
For a second or two the fire let up. Van Rensburg had to make an immediate decision.

He became aware that the light wasn't as bright as it had been earlier, and he figured it must have been close to 1700 hours. Also, he was in an area covered with thick bush, which gave him a slight advantage. If he were to get out of his predicament, it would have to be along a route through the undergrowth. He decided to wait for darkness to make his escape.

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### **Three Alouette IIIs hover below mountain waterfall during routine maneuvers.**

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Van Rensburg was also aware that he was inside Angolan territory, some distance from the South West African border. He would have to make it all the way back behind his own lines on foot.

The young South African pilot wasted no time. Scrambling on hands and knees, he edged toward a thicket of trees behind the truck. A minute later he was on his feet heading west.

He recalled having seen a road in the immediate vicinity before he crashed, and knew that if he were to head back to base, he would have to go south — but that meant crossing the road which was obviously being patrolled. For a while he kept moving westward, hoping desperately that the enemy would deploy to the south and away from him in their search.

It was obvious that SWAPO knew he was alive, and that he was a potential South African POW they had no intention of letting go free.

The pain from his back injury was excruciating, but van Rensburg pushed on. He had walked about a mile when he spotted a tall anthill (which in that part of Africa sometimes reach heights exceeding 20 feet).

"I went around it, regarding it as something of a landmark, then unexpectedly came upon a small branch lean-to. I spotted movement. I went cold. I knew that if I had detected the presence of someone else, they must have seen me, too."

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## Instinct: Survive!

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Van Rensburg spun around and saw a man in SWAPO's distinctive tiger-stripe camouflage sitting on the ground, an AK carbine slung across his knees. He was trying to get up as he shouted to someone nearby.

"It could have been my basic instinct for survival or a spur-of-the-moment decision — I don't know which — but I rushed him."

The young air force captain remembers nothing more of the event (even though I questioned him closely for several minutes about it) except that when he got to his feet again, he had managed to wrest the gun from the terr and shoot him. The shouting and the shots attracted the kind of attention that van Rensburg was desperately trying to avoid, so, with his new-found weapon, he ducked out the rear of the structure into the dense bush.

By then, several of the dead man's "compadres" were firing wildly in his direction, but they didn't follow him, undoubtedly fearing an ambush.

Van Rensburg remembers that during the next few hours, his escape to safety was punctuated by spasms of pain that

left him breathless. Several times he tried to rest by sitting or lying down. Once he tried to sleep for a couple of hours in a desperate bid for strength. But his back would take no pressure whatsoever.

He had to stay on his feet. He was also thirstier than he had ever been in his life — the cannister of water onboard the chopper had been destroyed in the crash.

Several times that evening van Rensburg had to avoid SWAPO patrols. Once he accidentally walked through the middle of a tiny village and was spotted by a local African — both men made hasty tracks in opposite directions. He knew that the alarm would be raised afresh.

By now the pilot's back was hurting so badly that he could no longer carry the AK, even though it weighed only a few pounds. He decided to stash it in a clump of tall grass.

This gesture, alone, was indicative of the incredible pain Capt. van Rensburg suffered. He abandoned the only means he had to protect his life.

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## Home After A Painful Walk

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An hour before dawn, the young chopper pilot crossed South African lines. There was no perceptible change in the terrain; the country was still arid, the bush thick. The narrow cutline, which lay straight as an arrow in an east-west direction, told him he had reached the border.

Most of the way out he had followed — at a distance — the same north-south road he had used as a marker on the way into Angola. He knew it was dangerous to walk on the road itself — it could have been mined or possibly had enemy stop groups waiting in ambush.

Once back on South West African soil, he had to beware of his "own" forces. They had no knowledge of his presence and, in the bad light, he could easily have been mistaken for a SWAPO member.

Then, at first light, he heard talking. These weren't enemy; they spoke his language — Afrikaans.

He shouted to alert them of his presence. The group was a patrol on routine ops. An hour later, Capt. Tinus van Rensburg was back at the same base from which he had lifted off almost 18 hours before. He was airlifted to a hospital at Oshakati under heavy sedation that same morning.

To date he has undergone three months' treatment for his back. Last reports state that he passed his flying physical and will be on active service once more by the time his story appears in print.

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## Distinguished Service

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Today, 17 Squadron, composed entirely of Alouette support choppers, has a history that extends beyond the lives of most of its present members. The unit was founded early in WWII as a general reconnaissance squadron. At the time — December 1940 — its component aircraft were largely Blenheims.

In 1942, the unit saw active service in Aden, North Africa and Italy — flying with British, American and other Allied squadrons and distinguishing itself in various major operations in and around the Mediterranean. Like other South African squadrons active during WWII, its flyers achieved their share of honors and decorations.

After the war, in 1947, 17 Squadron was reformed in South Africa as a maritime air-sea rescue unit operating with Venturas from Cape Town. Much of this work was of a practical nature — the Cape Sea route was almost as active then as it is today.

Then, in 1954, the wing was allocated its first chopper, a Sikorsky S51, and two years later they were given S55s. The first Alouettes were taken into service in 1960 and the more advanced Alouette III was introduced two years later.

Much of their early post-war activity was uneventful — the Squadron's major role was providing civil authorities with help when needed. And that's the way it remained — until the first SWAPO terrorist incursions into South West Africa from Angola occurred in 1966.

After a hiatus of more than two decades in military activities, 17 Squadron went to the task with gusto.

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## Perseverance

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Today, the Squadron is one of the most highly rated in South Africa. Its Honors Role lists almost 20 names, all of whom distinguished themselves in the face of the enemy. A large portion achieved merit during the Angolan civil war period when South Africa, virtually alone, helped stem Soviet and Cuban aggression in that vast, ungovernable territory to the north.

The unit has lost eight men — the majority in the kind of routine accidents which could occur in any helicopter squadron.

The record is a good one. Capt. Tinus van Rensburg's perseverance against terrifying odds testifies to that.



Ominous cutline through bush that separates Angola and South West Africa. Country is similar to that through which Capt. van Rensburg made his grueling escape back to his own lines.



Official insignia of 17 Squadron dating back to WWII.

## THE ALOUETTE III

The Alouette III helicopter is the offspring of the Alouette II, but with a larger cabin and a higher level of performance. On 28 February 1959, the first prototype was flown and, since then, 1,406 Alouette IIIs have been produced in France and sold to at least 73 different countries.

This turbine-driven, general-purpose chopper accommodates six persons plus pilot. It is usually equipped with a 7.62mm AA52 machine gun, mounted behind the pilot, firing to the starboard. Alternatively, a 20mm MG 151/20 cannon can be mounted on an open turret on the cabin's port side.

The Alouette III can be equipped with four AS.11 or two AS.12 wire-guided missiles on external, jettisonable launching rails, with an APX-Bezu 260 gyro-stabilized sight, or 68mm rocket pods.

It can accommodate two Mk44

homing torpedoes beneath the fuselage, or one torpedo and magnetic-anomaly-detection gear (MAD) in a container towed behind the chopper on a 150-foot cable.

For air-sea rescue operations, the Alouette III is equipped with a quick-mooring harpoon to ensure automatic mooring on landing and before take-off, a nosewheel locking device and folding rotor-blades. For search-and-destroy small-craft detection, it can be equipped with a SFENA three-axis stabilization system and OMER A ORB 31 radar.

In 1977, an Alouette III was involved in a hoist rescue mission in Canada. The chopper picked a stranded climber off a mountain at 13,900 feet. It is believed to be the greatest height at which a helicopter has effectively executed a rescue operation of this type.

—John Metzger

# VANG PAO'S ENDLESS STRUGGLE

Laotian Leader  
Continues The Fight

by Bob Poos



ABOVE: Gen. Vang Pao visits a Royal Laotian Army base camp near Boun Long in northern Laos in 1969. Note U.S. adviser talking into field radio at Vang Pao's right. CENTER: Gen. Vang Pao stands on his property in Montana. Note Bitterroot mountains in background. Photo: Bob Poos

*Editor's Note: Maj. Gen. Vang Pao, the only Muong tribesman ever to become a general officer in the Royal Laotian Army, was the recipient of the first annual Bull Simons award presented by SOF Magazine to an outstanding soldier of fortune or to a person who has displayed outstanding courage.*

*In recognition of the general's long struggle against communism in Southeast Asia, SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown presented Vang Pao with a reproduction of a crusader's sword during the banquet at the recent SOF convention.*

*Vang Pao first served with the French and later with the Laotian army, fighting for some 21 years against Pathet Lao native communists and the North Vietnamese — more years than most American soldiers spent months in Southeast Asia.*

*He has 18 decorations for personal bravery from four countries — France, Laos, the U.S. and Thailand — was wounded three times and survived nine air crashes. He speaks French, Vietnamese, Thai, Laotian, several Muong dialects and English.*



*SOF Executive Editor Bob Poos first met this unique man in 1967 while on assignment as an Associated Press war correspondent covering the so-called "secret war" in Laos.*

*Poos escorted Vang Pao, his son Chang Vang and an aide to the convention and, prior to that, spent two days with Vang Pao at his ranch near Missoula, Mont. This is his report:*

**I**T is 10,000 miles from Long Cheng, Laos, to the Valley of the Bitterroot in



Gen. Vang Pao points out enemy positions to an Australian journalist during fighting in 1972.

Montana at the foot of the mountains of the same name. And, in some respects, it is much farther than that.

Long Cheng, during the days that Gen. Vang Pao led his Muong tribesmen in their endless struggle against communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese, was surrounded by blood, death, suffering, the roar of artillery and the rattle of small arms.

The Valley of the Bitterroot is perhaps one of the most peaceful places on the face of the earth. The only gunfire heard there is in the fall during deer and elk season.

Gen. Vang Pao lost his war in Laos but he's fighting another now, in this country, that he is determined not to lose — for recognition and acceptance by Americans of his people.

Vang Pao lives among some 136 Muong in the Valley of the Bitterroot. But there are something like 50,000 Laotians in the U.S. and 30,000 of them are Muong, which is not particularly surprising despite the fact that they were a minority in Laos. As those Americans who either knew or served with them are aware, the Muong tend to be more aggressive and resourceful than the bulk of the lowland Lao.

By most accounts, they made the best troops of any which fought in Laos. The



Gen. Vang Pao prepares to board U.S. helicopter for tour of the front in 1972. Vang Pao survived nine air crashes during his long fight against communists in Southeast Asia.

first time I was there, an American adviser (they called them military attaches in Laos) told me: "Go on up to Long Cheng and see Vang Pao and his Muong. They're the best there is around here. The best regular unit in the Royal Laotian Army is Group Mobile [regiment] 21 — but Vang Pao and his irregulars are even better."

Vang Pao, unlike many of his counterpart Vietnamese politicians and generals who fled before the communist takeover, remains the acknowledged leader of his people, whether they be Muong or lowland Lao, and many of the Vietnamese and Cambodians in this country look to him for advice and leadership.

Vang Pao travels some 90,000 miles a year speaking to and advising Southeast Asian refugees of all nationalities. But, of course, the Muong are his own and it is to them that he has dedicated his life.

## Greatest Muong Victory

The former general, who usually has a cheerful grin on his round face — despite his anguish — does not talk much about the war he fought alongside the Americans. He doesn't even own a uniform anymore. "Thirty years of that was enough," he says.

But he does like to recall the Muong's greatest victory against the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese — a series of battles in 1969-70. "We captured one billion dollars worth of equipment," he says, "including tanks, artillery and small arms. And we turned it all on the enemy."

Vang Pao, who lives on a 402-acre farm/ranch near the village of Woodside, about 50 miles outside of Missoula, couples his visits to Muong, Lao and other Southeast Asian refugee com-

munities around the country with speaking engagements to Americans — as he did at the SOF convention.

"Americans simply do not realize what we did for them during the war," he observes. "We rescued more than 100 shot-down pilots in Laos and North Vietnam. We ambushed North Vietnamese columns coming down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We fought the NVA in pitched battles in Laos, drawing away troops which would have been fighting the Americans in South Vietnam. Proportionately, my people lost more men than did any other country in Southeast Asia — Vietnam and Cambodia included.

"But there was very little publicity about it. Very few news reporters even came to Laos, and fewer still got close to our war. America remains largely unaware of what we did."

Acceptance of the Muong in Vang Pao's home area — where he lives with his one remaining wife (in Laos he had six), a son, four daughters and one grandchild — varies.

Said Mrs. Elaine Severson, operator of a general store in Woodside: "I like having them here. They're polite, quiet and hardworking. The children are a delight. When they're in my store, I don't have any worries about anything being stolen — which is more than you can say for some American kids."

A waitress in a downtown Missoula restaurant said, "I guess it's OK having them here — as long as they don't eat my cats." (There is a story, probably apocryphal, that some Muong had been capturing and eating the pet cats of Missoula residents.)

Many Missoula residents, questioned on the street, in drugstores and hotels, were unaware of the Muong community

or of the presence of an acknowledged hero of the Southeast Asia war.

But Mrs. Severson said there had been some ugly incidents, although none recently. She said there was at least one case of a Muong being assaulted, and another when one was dragged behind a car by some of the rougher inhabitants of Missoula, who resented the hard-working Muong competitors in the job market — who would work harder for less.

## Natural Leader

His early life and training would not seem to prepare Vang Pao for becoming a sort of father figure to a displaced people, advising them on everything from their love lives to how to find jobs. He virtually sprang from childhood into the military service — the French military, which was at the time a harsh school for soldiers.

Vang Pao was born 51 years ago in the village of Nong Het, Laos, 450 kilometers north of Vientiane and almost on the border of North Vietnam.

He left school in 1945 to enlist in the regular French army. The French were seldom known for their wisdom in dealing with the people they colonized, but they apparently spotted leadership qualities in this young man. Vang Pao became a sergeant major in less than two years and rose to the rank of adjutant (top enlisted rank in the French army) by 1950, when he transferred to the Laotian army — also as an adjutant.

The lowland Lao, for once abandoning their traditional dislike and mistrust of the Muong, sent him to officer school and, again, he rose quickly, becoming a major in two years.

*Continued on page 76*





**TOP LEFT:** Gen. Vang Pao fires U.S. M2-A1 105mm howitzer at enemy positions near Phou Chimoklok, Laos, during a battle in 1968. **TOP RIGHT:** Gen. Vang Pao is interviewed by U.S. TV newswoman at 1st annual SOF convention. The general was awarded the first Bull Simons Memorial Award for outstanding bravery during his long struggle against communist Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese. Photo: Bob Poos **ABOVE:** Gen. Vang Pao and staff examine some of the \$1 billion worth of Soviet equipment captured during a series of battles on the Plain des Jarres in Laos in 1969-70. Shown are PT-76 Light Amphibious Tanks, Model 1, recognizable by multi-slotted muzzle brake and no bore evacuator.

# ABERDEEN RANGES IN O

## Preliminary Tests



by Galen L. Geer

*Editor's Note: In its effort to keep SOF readers abreast of the current information available on the Soviet 5.45mm round and the weapons in which it is used, SOF sent Foreign Correspondent Galen Geer to observe tests in the U.S. on the new ammo, while SOF stringers in Pakistan managed to get their hands on the machine-gun version of the AK-74 — the RPK-74.*

*Photographers Paul James and Mark Land fired the RPK-74 in Darra, but didn't burn up a lot of ammo since*

*5.45mm rounds are selling at 70 cents each. AK-74s and RPK-74s are also available in Darra for \$2,700 — down from an original asking price of \$5,000. While SOF does not have one of the new weapons in its possession, it is known that some AK-74s and RPK-74s are in the United States for testing and evaluation.*

*However, in the tests observed by Geer, the 5.45mm cartridges were test-fired from a barrel produced in the U.S.*

**S**OVIET 5.45mm cartridges, brought out of Afghanistan by *Soldier of Fortune* Publisher Robert K. Brown and SOF Foreign Correspondent Galen Geer, recently underwent a series of tests at U.S.-intelligence labs.

SOF was on hand for one series of tests at the Ballistic Research Laboratory (BRL) at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds. The BRL tests, conducted in a special underground range over a four-day period, employed a Mann test barrel built by

# N RUSSIA'S NEW ROUND

## Show Surprises



RPK-74 with bipod extended. RPK-74 differs from the RPK-47 in that the 74 has a folding stock and flash suppressor. This folding stock makes the weapon ideal for airborne operations and facilitates use in Soviet fighting vehicles. The RPK-74 fires the new Soviet 5.45x39.5 cartridge.





**LEFT:** SOF Photographer Paul James follows local gun dealer to range near Darra, Pakistan. Dealer has RPK-74, captured in Afghanistan, slung over back.



**RIGHT:** RPK-74 folding stock breaks to the left so as not to interfere with bolt operation and safety.

## COMING UP ON AFGHANISTAN

Next month David Isby, a specialist on Soviet tactics, takes a close look at what the USSR has planned for the Afghan Freedom Fighters during the winter. In addition, another SOF writer, who came out of Afghanistan in December, is working on an update.

**BELOW:** James photographs load-and-fire procedure of Soviet RPK-74.



Barrett John Obermyer under the sponsorship of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine and the National Rifle Association.

By using a high-speed-photography technique called "spark photography," ballistics experts at the Proving Grounds were able to photograph AK-74 rounds in flight at some 40 points along a 100-yard range. Tests on chamber pressure were performed and, by downloading 5.45mm ammunition to decrease velocity, tests were conducted to determine yaw. Other

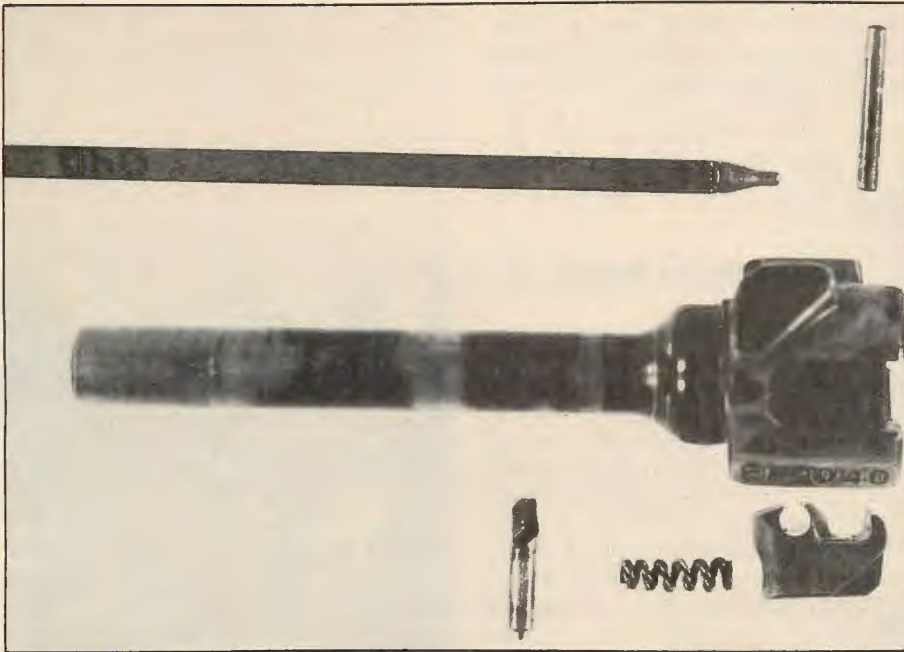
tests were conducted to determine the bullet's actual range and the metals used in its manufacture.

From the test results, researchers will be able to devise body-armor countermeasures and other essential combat defense information.

The BRL tests also revealed that the Soviets were using an unusually high percentage of arsenic to cohere the lead in the round, but researchers are not certain at

this time if the high percentage of arsenic contributes to the damage caused by the bullet.

The final test results will not be available to SOF for another two months, since the information from the various labs is being checked against other data and compiled into a final report. Early results, however, have startled some of the experts. Bob McCoy, the engineer from the BRL who is directing the AK-74 research, was impressed with the bullet's



**ABOVE:**  
Heavier extractor for the 74 series weapons. Shown is: No. 1 bolt, No. 2 firing pin, No. 3 retaining pin, No. 4 ejector, No. 5 ejector and extractor spring, No. 6 improved extractor.



**LEFT:**  
Bottom extractor is from the 74 series of weapons. Evident is the much heavier extraction paw and finer machining on the 74 extractor. Top extractor is from the 47 series of weapons.



Obermyer mold to show the slope and depth of rifling cut into barrel of AK-74. Note the rounded edges and sloped side of the rifling.  
Photo: C.E.D. Kite

flight pattern after viewing the first "in-flight" photos.

"When the round is fired out of a stable test barrel," he said, "there is not as much yaw [side-to-side motion] as we first expected to find."

Early firings of the round from an issue weapon indicated that the "74" maintained stable flight for the first 300 yards at a velocity of 2950 feet per second (fps). However, after 300 yards, the velocity dropped to 2040 fps and the yaw motion began to show up on the photos. At 500 yards the fps dropped to 1350 and the bullet became unstable. The researchers all agreed that the AK-74 is a short-range weapon and that the early rumors of its being a "superweapon" were unfounded.

Another aspect of the Soviet round which impressed McCoy was that the Russians were able to design and build effective combat ammo using low-grade metals.

"They've built an effective round, but they've had to give up a lot of quality control," McCoy explained. "Their propel-

lent is not as good as ours and the steel penetrator [core] is only mild steel."

Suspicions that the Soviets were using a poison bullet appear to result from the wounds produced by the round. When it was fired into the gelatin block, the round did not explode as first expected, but began to tumble wildly, creating a "tear" wound rather than a "hole." Wounds would be so severe that, unless medical attention were prompt, a man could die of infection, according to McCoy.

What surprised the experts was the fact that the bullet did not explode or mushroom when it struck the gelatin. Instead, it's the combination of the bullet's long axis and borderline stability that produce the wound. It is possible, however, that if the round were to strike bone, it would explode.

What may be the most important development in the AK-74 is not the actual round but the rifling. Our weapons use a more defined land-and-groove arrangement, but the Soviets are using a sloped-type land arrangement and a much more

rapid twist (one revolution for every 7.7 inches).

"I had to grind a 55-degree bevel on the cutter to reproduce the rifling in the AK-74," said Obermyer. "The slope prevents the breaking up of steel-jacketed bullets in the barrel, reduces fouling and increases barrel life.

"A lot they [the Russians] have done to that barrel makes a lot of sense."

Bob McCoy noted after the first series of tests, "I think this shows the Russians do have some good engineers, but the materials used and their quality all lead back to the same thing — the Russians are still thinking in terms of quantity and not quality. All they want to do is kill their enemy, and they are prepared to expend vast amounts of cheap ammunition to do that."

The final test results, including photos of the AK round in flight, will appear in a future issue of SOF after the tests are completed.



## MARAUDERS

Continued from page 37

rose steadily through the ranks. In 1918 he was commissioned a lieutenant.

Lt. Klems thrived during the desert and mountain campaigns against the Berbers. But when he was posted back to Fez in 1920 his heartily reciprocated hate of the French proved too much of a strain. One night at dinner in the Hotel de Maroc he got into an argument with his commanding officer. The French captain called him a *Boche*. Klems, who had had more than his share of wine and cognac, flattened the captain with one punch.

Klems raced back to the barracks. He looted all the funds in the company office and several rifles and pistols, put on a long, flowing Moroccan *djebella* over his legion uniform and rode into the hills of the Beni Warrenne.

For the next several years we have to rely mainly on Klems' version of events. He claimed that after deserting he met a tribe of wandering Berbers who took him prisoner. Klems pleaded for his life but the Berbers began digging a hole to bury him alive — standard procedure for getting rid of prisoners.

Inexplicably, the tribe's old chief spared his life at the last minute on the condition that he become a Moslem. Klems agreed and was circumcised. However, for many months he remained a tribal slave. Then, for obscure reasons, Klems was suddenly permitted to marry the chief's daughter. He described her, naturally, as being a lovely, sensuous desert beauty. Maybe she was.

### Mysterious Calling Card

Klems now had real status with the people of the Beni Warrenne. He was given a horse, a rifle and a nickname: El Hadj — an Arab name for a Moslem who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. A primitive, ignorant people, the tribesmen knew only that Klems came from the mysterious outside world which included Mecca.

Final acceptance of El Hadj came when he was permitted to join in a night attack on the French. Klems helped the tribesmen wipe out an eight-man blockhouse garrison. He left behind a paper on which he had scrawled the name "El Hadj" — the first of many.

From then on, El Hadj took part in every action. He joined in the mountain violence sweeping Morocco. There were attacks on Arab villages, ambushes of French convoys, night raids on French outposts.

El Hadj soon became military commander of the Beni Warrenne Berbers. He was a natural. He was a good soldier and knew French strategy and tactics, their positions and weak points. He understood the French military mentality. Frequently he would conduct his own pre-attack reconnaissance of a target area. Wearing his

Foreign Legion uniform, El Hadj would ride boldly into French garrison towns. Besides securing intelligence, he would enter military posts while the officers were at mess and steal arms, money and documents. Always he would leave behind a slip of paper bearing his name. To both French and Moroccans, El Hadj became a legend.

### On To Bigger Battles

By late 1923, El Hadj decided that he had outgrown the hills of the Beni Warrenne. He wanted to break into the really bigtime and serve under the mighty Abd el Krim himself. In November of that year, El Hadj made his way to Abd el Krim's stronghold at Adjdir, identified himself and volunteered his services. It took the Rif chieftain three weeks to check out his story — then he made El Hadj a *caid*, or chief, and presented him with another wife.

Caid El Hadj now took himself very seriously indeed. He was no adventurer, he insisted to Sheehan, no mercenary. He was a sincere convert to Islam and a loyal lieutenant to his great leader, Abd el Krim. El Hadj had also settled down to a rather complicated domestic life with "three wives and a son in the Rif, a wife and son in the Beni Warrenne and another wife at Sheshuan... I also have three horses and five mules."

But El Hadj's domesticity didn't cause him to neglect his military duties. He took primitive mountain Berbers and captured cannons and organized batteries of effective artillery. He tried to reverse the policy whereby all captured enemy deserters were imaginatively executed on the spot. He was partially successful. Several hundred Spanish Foreign Legion prisoners survived long enough for job interviews. He selected 23, plus four German deserters from the French Foreign Legion. The Europeans formed an efficient staff of instructors and advisers.

### Man For All Seasons

El Hadj was a military man for all seasons. Among his talents was a knack for topography. He drew up the only real maps of the Rif and pinpointed sites for successful assaults and ambushes. In his role as artillery commander, he headed a 350-man corps. They were a new force in the Rifian ranks: regulars — picked men on full-time duty.

Klems had captured several heavy guns. They ranged from 65mm Schneiders up to an enormous 155mm howitzer. Firepower also included dozens of Hotchkiss machine guns.

The Rifians crewed the guns with amazing sophistication. They blew away whole strings of French forts and relief columns.

By necessity, El Hadj also became a logistician. He learned how to maneuver his heavy guns around the mountains and





followed that up by building a chain of hidden ammo dumps. Then he began linking up his gunners, the ammo dumps and headquarters through a crude but workable telephone network. El Hadj took all the bows for the innovations, but he had expert assistance — including such people as former Serbian army Capt. Moshe Cuvalo, his artillery adviser; Otto Noja, an ex-legionnaire who directed communications; and Norwegian doctor Walter Heintgeint, who headed up the medical section.

### PsyWar And Slit Throats

Klems-El Hadj also directed the psywar program. It operated on two levels. Legionnaires, particularly Germans, were bombarded with leaflets calling on them to desert. Another extremely effective technique was nightly infiltration into legion positions by lone guerrillas armed only with daggers. They slithered in, slit throats, grabbed guns and slipped out.

The legion was particularly vulnerable, being invariably assigned to the most exposed points. Morale crashed as desertions soared, and internal backbiting followed, as did adverse publicity. It took years for the legion to pull itself together.

And so the Rifians rolled forward, everywhere triumphant. In the north, the hapless Spaniards were still pinned against the sea. In French Morocco, town after town was overrun, fort after fort captured. Morocco's capital, Rabat, was in danger.

Meanwhile, both the Spanish and French were struggling to bring their airpower to bear on the Rif. In 1924 the Spanish air force incinerated several Rifian villages with what were probably the first napalm-type bombs in military aviation history. A few months later the French began to organize a special squadron of American fliers of fortune.

### American Escadrille Cherifienne

Modeled upon the famed Lafayette Escadrille, the squadron was allegedly in the service of the puppet Sultan of Morocco. Its short history is an interesting commentary on the peculiar relationship which has always existed between France and her mercenaries.

The Escadrille Cherifienne was officially founded in Paris in July 1925. Its commander was Col. Charles Sweeney, a versatile soldier of fortune. Sweeney had studied at Notre Dame, then spent some

**TOP: Spanish troops, carrying Spanish 7mm Mausers, retreating after disastrous expedition against Moors. LEFT: In addition to El Hadj, there were other Westerners who took up arms in Morocco against French and Spanish troops. Photos: Brown Bros.**



Spanish troops, bearing Spanish 7mm Mausers, retreating under escort of one of their biplanes. Photo: Brown Bros.

restless years at West Point. He either left voluntarily or was kicked out of the Academy and joined the foreign legion. He fought throughout WWI with distinction. In 1918, he ran out of war and looked around for another. Sweeney found it when the Poles revolted against the Russians. He joined up and became an artillery commander in the Polish army. He also turned out to be a crack pilot.

The 17 Americans and four Frenchmen whom Sweeney recruited were also professionals. They included former aces of the Lafayette Escadrille such as Cols. Charles Kerwood and Austin Parker. Once organized, however, the French proceeded to misuse and mistreat their hired hands.

The merc squadron left immediately for Morocco, where it was assigned 10 decrepit French Breguets. Pay was \$40 a month — period. No flight pay. No combat pay. They were even told to pay for their own meals. The food was bad, the lodgings worse and the aircraft untrustworthy. The French command got their money's worth. They piled on missions to the point that the fliers were almost flying the wings off their planes. The situation became ridiculous and the squadron broke up at the end of 1925.

Sweeney and his flyboys had every reason to tell the French where to shove their

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Roman goes back a long way with SOF (see "The CIA Assassination of Trujillo," Summer '75, "Operation Diablo," Summer '76, and "Superstar vs. Dragon Throne," November, December '79).

Roman saw his first military action in WWII in the Merchant Marine at age 16, followed by four years in the Marines — mainly in China.

Next came the Caribbean and Central America. He worked as a consultant to Tacho Somoza, dictator of Nicaragua, who was later assassinated. Then there was a stint as an automatic-weapons instructor with a Guatemalan exile army led by Carlos Catillo Armas, who also died an unnatural death.

Not having learned his lesson about the violence that surrounds Latin American leaders, his next employer was Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic — also assassinated.

Our author now leads a more tranquil life, more literary than violent in nature. We here at SOF are glad to see his work back in our pages.

—C.E.D. Kite

Breguets. However, they shouldn't be confused with another and very different type of American in French service bailing out at about the same time. This was the wave of Americans who had joined the Foreign Legion in the early 1920s and wound up in Morocco. Their chapter in the history of Americans in the legion is just plain tacky.

### Volunteer Storytellers

Few Americans or Britons have ever really taken to the legion, although there are some exceptions. One was South Dakota-born Robert Thorne. He had served in the U.S. Marines, the Chinese Imperial Navy, was a trader in the South Pacific, fought in Mexican revolutions, then went on to a brilliant tour of duty in the legion.

More typical was one Bernard Dhoty. He won the Croix de Guerre in the legion. However, it was in another way that he best represented the 1920's generation of American volunteers. He deserted, then found he could make a few dollars writing sensational stories denouncing the legion. The more lurid, the more dollars. Soon the literary market was flooded with the horrified whimperings of legion deserters who had been confronted with the reality of the Rif. The Americans were more trouble than they were worth and around



1930 the legion ceased to accept their enlistments — a ban which continued until WWII.

However, despite shattered morale and more shattering defeats, the end was in sight for the Rifian wars. Abd el Krim was fast running out of Rifian warriors. Soon he began running out of Rifian country. French superiority in manpower, firepower and airpower was simply too overwhelming and reinforcements kept pouring in.

In early 1926, the whole Rifian movement began falling apart. The tribesmen reverted to their earlier tradition of turning on each other; some even joined the French and hunted down their former brethren. The French army swept over the last Rifian strongholds.

Abd el Krim surrendered 26 May 1926.

But El Hadj was still missing. The French launched a vast manhunt. Thousands of French troops fanned out through the bleak mountains and deserts of northern Morocco. Every village was searched. Cavalrymen halted and checked every caravan and wandering tribe. Still

no Klems. The hunt went on for six months.

The end came high in the Atlas Mountains when a veiled Berber girl told a legion patrol that El Hadj was hiding in a nearby cave. She described the cave's location. El Hadj was there, all right. The legionnaires flushed him out of his hole. The filthy, ragged, disease-ridden figure dragged into the sunlight was but a shadow of the powerful leader remembered from the great days of El Hadj.

The rest of the story of the fallen El Hadj is anticlimactic. The deserter and traitor was sentenced to death by a French court-martial in February 1927. However, the world press had given Klems the Desert Song treatment and powerful pressure for clemency was brought to bear. So the French reduced his sentence to seven years on Devil's Island. But he never served that sentence. Instead, he was quietly shipped back to Germany.

Klems, who knew only two vocations, theft and war, quickly reverted to his previous trade. But he had never been a ball of fire as a criminal. In August 1929,

the Berlin police busted him on suspicion of burglary.

No one will ever know what thoughts went through the mind of "Caid El Hadj, Robin Hood of the border country," as he sat alone in his cell, but we can guess — for Klems-El Hadj took out a small knife the police had overlooked, slashed his wrists and quietly bled to death.

That ending is not in Sigmund Romberg's operetta.

What of the Rif today? It has become something of a tourist resort area with luxury hotels where once there was only desolation and death. The country seems depopulated — not by slaughter, but because people, particularly the young, have flocked to the cities. Today one finds the sons and grandsons of the Rif warriors in Tangier and Casablanca.

However, it is said that far back in the hills, lean, hawk-faced old men still mumble of Abd el Krim, El Hadj and the warrior tribesmen of the Rif who once made empires tremble.



Camels in Morocco, being used to transport guns and ammunition. Photo: Brown Bros.





Charge! Once out of boat, contestant teams had to get to shore quickly to engage their final sets of targets.



Don Clark, director of Pioneer Practical Rifles, spots target in farmhouse doorway during Stage Two.

# DOG DAY AFTERNOON

## New Concept In Combat Riflecraft

Text & Photos by Jake Jatras

**T**HE line flowed through Dick's hands. Abruptly the heat intensified as he attempted to clench the rope tighter, but the burning pain held him back. He couldn't let go — not yet. Only 20 feet to go. Now!

He struck the ground hard and immediately unslung his rifle. He'd have to shoot fast before his inflamed hands made it impossible to get off an accurate shot. Spotting his opponent, he shouldered the weapon and fired two quick shots. Both rounds struck the adversary in the head.

Dick began running. After three-quarters of a mile through the dense woods he was exhausted, and each step became more difficult — but it would be over soon. "Operation Dog Days" would be completed.

"Operation Dog Days," a unique assault-rifle exercise, was conceived and sponsored by the Pioneer Practical Rifles in Omaha, Neb. Don Clark, PPR director, designed the course to be run by two-man teams.

Assault-rifle matches are proliferating around the U.S., but to date most have been for individuals only. The concept of team shooting is an important new development. A reliable partner in the field is essential to a successful mission.

### Team Work

Stage One commenced with each team member engaging targets (standard IPSC Item targets) at 300 yards. The first member of the team fired and then moved to a wall, ready to lower himself into an abandoned quarry. As soon as the second team member ceased firing, both shooters climbed down a rocky cliff to the second firing point.

After engaging the targets at Station Two, the team proceeded to Point Three — a buoy in the middle of a small lake. (Ever try shooting out of a small, moving boat? Quite a trick.) One team member kept the small craft from drifting, while the other concentrated on shooting. A couple of entrants almost toppled out of their improvised landing craft, but managed to right themselves in time.

MARCH/81

Moving away from the marker, the team paddled toward shore. Offshore, at a second buoy, they disembarked into the water and charged ashore to engage their last two sets of targets. Since the event was timed, each team ran full out.

Stage Two presented the teams with a challenging run through heavy woods. Firing points were marked, and all targets had to be hit in the six-inch-by-six-inch head to score. Both metal and cardboard targets were utilized.

Targets were placed in a bunker, some partially hidden behind trees and one in the dark doorway of an old farm shed. This target proved most difficult to hit

While this method was faster than a hand-over-hand descent, it caused quite a few rope burns.

After engaging the last target, riflemen headed for a rope slide. In order to end the run, each man had to use a slide to reach the staging area at the bottom of the hill. The team members' time was set upon landing and showing the range official that their weapons were clear.

The five winning teams made the run in under 11 minutes, proving one had to be in top condition to be competitive in a match of this nature.

The top five teams were: First, Dick Marx and Lynn Schoening; Second, Jim



Gene Carkoski fires M1A1 from Station One while partner Don Clark gets ready to move to Firing Point Two.

because it blended in with the shadows and had to be taken out with a head shot, body hits not counting for this stage.

Shooters next came upon an abandoned farm house with targets hidden inside. They had to be careful not to pass a target.

One of the more arduous obstacles was a 50-foot-plus drop that team members had to negotiate using a rope. Because the hill sloped away from them, many had to slide down the rope to get to the bottom.

Hazelton and Ron Keiser; Third, John Cowdrey and Bob Lanoha; Fourth, Don Clark and Gene Carkoski; Fifth, Hank Belitz and Dennis McCumber.

Original, well-thought-out rifle matches like "Operation Dog Days" illustrate the importance of having a reliable partner in any operation.



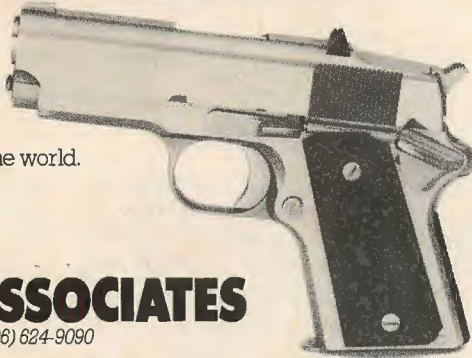
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## BLACK VIRGIN

*Continued from page 34*

medevac operation. He couldn't. He sat in the APC, his head in his hands, sobbing uncontrollably. I relayed the captain's orders, but I don't think he understood a thing I said.

"Why?" he asked. "For God's sake, why?"

I'd just seen a man's head blown off and two guys' intestines sprayed around the inside of a punctured APC like so much red paint from an aerosol can. I couldn't answer the lieutenant's question so I ran the dust-off myself.

While the line troops moved further into the woods, the medics had their hands full. Bodies were stacked and the wounded were cared for. The medevac chopper was on its way.

Lt. Gerrold, leader of the third platoon, had followed one of his men into a shoulder-deep trench. The soldier spotted a VC rifleman slipping into a bunker and pulled the pin on a frag grenade. Charlie shot the soldier in the throat and the activated grenade dropped between him and the lieutenant and exploded.

Lt. Gerrold was an exceptional officer and a decent person. A West Point graduate more interested in playing football than war games, he'd planned a return to civilian life following his Vietnam tour of duty. At that moment he had a crack in his forehead that exposed most of the frontal lobe of his brain. He also had a sucking chest wound so large it couldn't have been plugged by a Hefty trash bag. Lt. Gerrold died, and so did the soldier that dropped the grenade. Before the medevac helicopter arrived, 14 more died.

We threw smoke and the chopper pilot acknowledged the color — it would have been difficult to miss us. With so many dead and 27 wounded, battalion had secured us a Chinook. It was the first time I'd ever seen one used for a dust-off.

Later that day congratulations came down from battalion — we'd successfully accomplished our mission. The trenches were the first line of defense for the most elaborate system of tunnels and bunkers that intelligence had ever seen. We'd found the base camp that soldiers from two divisions had been searching for for months.

## Dubious Victory

A network of passageways led to a two-story underground hospital, a munitions factory and a print shop with two presses. Above and below the surface the camp sprawled over several acres. At least half the complex was on Cambodian soil. Engineers followed intelligence experts and blew every trench, tunnel, bunker and

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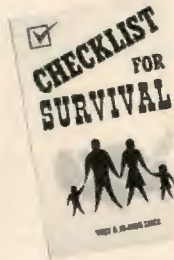


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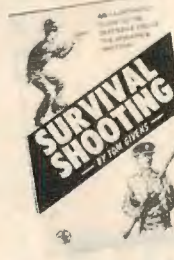
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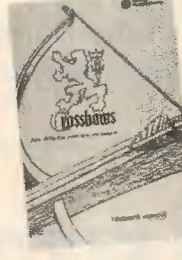
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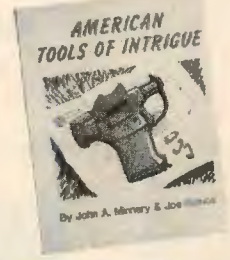
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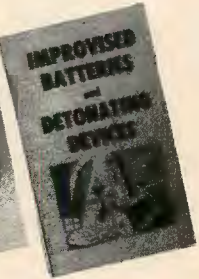
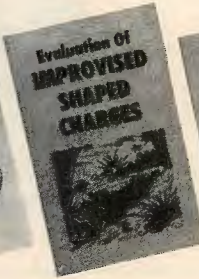
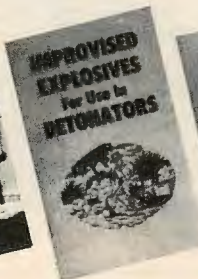
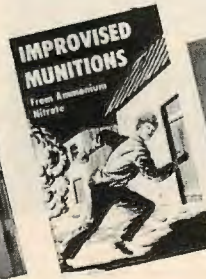
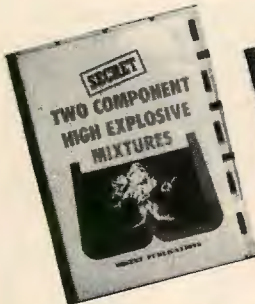
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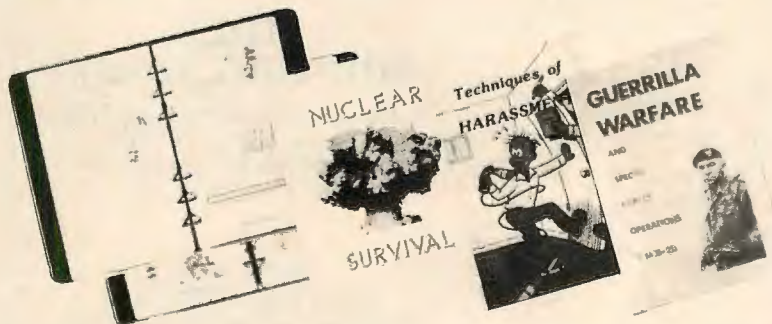
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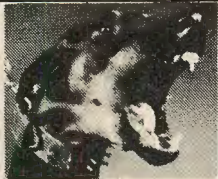
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## ENEMY

Continued from page 45

is the steel traction claw on the bottom which provides a positive grip on ice.

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At the Colorado Outward Bound School we found that after two full days of ski instruction, USMC and Navy personnel were competent enough to carry 40-pound packs and could be expected to go into the back country on extended patrols at elevations of 12,000 to 13,000 feet and return with minimal problems. We had some injuries, but any training effort must risk them to be effective. We weren't preparing for a church picnic. The Russians are masters at winter warfare — Ivan may shove your skis down your throat.

Perhaps the method of transport is beyond the power of the unit commander to decide, but anyone anticipating using training units to fight in cold weather or to engage in cold-weather operations should be aware of his options.

## Personal Equipment

Personal equipment for cold-weather operations should be selected with care and consideration of exposure to abnormal temperatures. The following areas have a documented base for concern.

## Canteens and Water

Water and the problems relating to its acquisition and intake become a major stumbling block to troops participating in cold-weather operations. Individuals should carry metal canteens, because the general issue is useless if it freezes. Although injury may result from touching the metal with fingers or lips at sub-zero temperatures, compared to dehydration, this risk is acceptable. Thawing a plastic canteen effectively is nearly impossible — you're left with a plastic-coated popsicle.

Water should be carried and sought in its liquid state. Melting snow is a fuel-consuming, time-consuming effort. Depending upon the snow, the ratio averages five-to-one: five quarts of hard-packed snow to produce one quart of water. Eating snow is no solution. It lowers body temperature and, if continued, causes inflammation of the gums, which can be painful.

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## Will the next 4 years bring a MAJOR depression ... and war... to America?

by Roy S. Watne  
Freelance Reporter

**A** MAJOR DEPRESSION, CIVIL turmoil, a dictatorship and gun confiscation may be ahead for America," now warns International Consultant and Survival Expert Hans J. Schneider. Far fetched? NOT AT ALL!

Hans spent his childhood in the Third Reich . . . his boyhood in the rubble of communist-occupied East Germany. His father, a former industrialist, lost \$10 million overnight and was imprisoned. This was a time when thousands of a disarmed populace were ruthlessly murdered. Hans and his family had to search the forests for food in order to survive.

### BAD TIMES AHEAD

Don't ignore his warning. Hans J. Schneider is internationally respected for his rather accurate political and economic forecasts.

After twenty years of research, he has reached this conclusion: "America will go through a major depression within the next four years." He foresees big cities as centers of bloodshed, food shortages, and massive unemployment. People unable to cope with these conditions, will demand a dictatorial government to restore order, just like they did in his own homeland, Germany. The result? A MAJOR WORLD WAR.

Hans Schneider adds: "Even if all these events don't happen, any one of them could spell disaster to unprepared Americans, physically and financially."

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Mr. Schneider has written a book which I believe every concerned American should read. **TIMELY AND PROFITABLE HELP FOR TROUBLED AMERICANS** reveals his proven plan for your freedom and survival during economic and social turmoil.

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Mr. Schneider is not a theorist, but actually "practices what he preaches," as one newspaper reporter put it. Hans, his lovely wife, and their five children live in unspoiled wilderness next to a spring-fed stream, teeming with trout. They produce most of their own food and enjoy a wonderful family life. Is this your dream? His book shows how you can do it too!

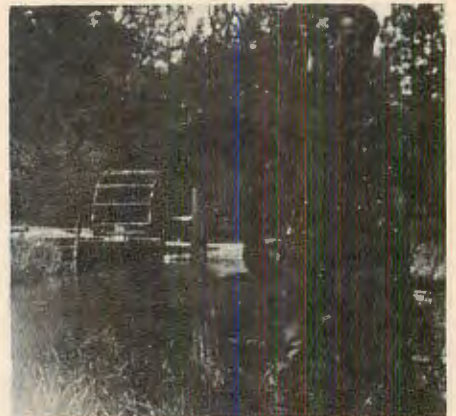
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Hans J. Schneider believes we are headed for a disastrous social and economic period. But he has practical advice to help you profitably survive this time.

boyhood passion for flying in his communist-occupied homeland, the years he spent on dangerous aviation missions through war-torn Europe and the near-fatal accounts of his travels in almost 100 countries. It is beautifully illustrated with over 110 photos/drawings and a full-color cover.

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Commanders should understand the following basic physiological aspects of cold on their troops: The body loses moisture through its normal functions of breathing, perspiration and urination. Exposure to cold weather increases the urge to urinate. Hard work and heavy clothing increase perspiration and breathing rate. To compound the problem, the normal thirst mechanism diminishes. Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have a forced-drink policy for desert troops (see also "Overdrink For Survival," SOF, January '79). This policy would also be valid for cold-weather operations.

## Drink Up

Individuals should be required to drink two quarts of water per day. Dehydration is simple to assess in troop populations. Designate a "pee tree" and watch for orange/red patches after urination. Urine should be light yellow. If patches turn progressively darker in color, urine is too concentrated and dehydration is a problem. Other problems then set in which can completely debilitate a unit. The point is this — thirsty or not, drink two quarts of water per day. Coffee is a diuretic and should be avoided.

One of life's greatest pleasures is emptying the plumbing after a few tankards of ale with the boys. In minus 20-degree weather at 3 a.m., crawling out of a warm sleeping bag for this function loses its charm. It is difficult to ask troops to force-drink to prevent dehydration and then expect them to accept the natural consequence without complaint. The solution is a "pee" bottle with a wide mouth and secure cap close to the sleeping bag for in-bag use. Be sure the volume is sufficient for the quantity.

Constipation can also be related to dehydration; however, many troops refuse to heed the call. As a result they become constipated and, as the condition progresses, less able to function. The solution is simple, but unpleasant in practice: drink two quarts of water each day and drop your pants.

## Protective Eyeglasses

Snow blindness will occur if the eyes are not protected. Good-quality glacier glasses are a necessity. Regular sunglasses will not protect the eyes from reflected rays that enter through their open sides. Glasses should fit close to the face for maximum protection.

## Bathing

Perhaps of least concern to troops serving in cold-weather operations is bathing. I never found a Marine willing to take a snow bath as described in some of the survival manuals. In fact, I never found *anyone* who would take a snow bath. However, on extended exercises, to assure

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that skin problems are minimized, troops should be encouraged to carry some pre-moistened, pre-packaged towels.

### Stove

There is no question that a hot meal boosts morale. In winter operations, its value increases tenfold, yet is ten times as hard to achieve. C-rations freeze at low temperatures and normal heat tabs are useless to thaw them out.

The squad stove, similar to the Coleman Peak I series, works when filled with gasoline but is next to useless when used with any other fuel. Fuels must vaporize to be combustible. Heavier fuels refuse to do so at low temperatures.

The Yukon stove is excellent to thaw food and warm tents but useless for small, mobile units because of its size. The Canadian forces use a small pressure cooker to help prepare food — a good idea, but one limited to mechanized units.

Individuals would do well to look at the Coleman Peak I series, the MSR systems and the Optimus/Primus stoves. Light, efficient and effective, these stoves will certainly meet the needs of small, highly mobile units. Using them in cold weather requires two special considerations:

A small square of Ensolite® should be placed underneath the stove to prevent it from melting into a hole. Also, all cooking should be done in a cook hole — a shallow hole 18 to 20 inches below the snow's surface. This allows the maximum amount of heat to reach the food container. In a breeze, stove effectiveness is greatly diminished.

Be cautious when filling the stove, as frostbite can occur if fuel is spilled on bare flesh. Fuels freeze at well below 32 degrees Fahrenheit — human flesh does not.

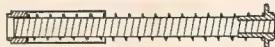
### Conclusions

The civilian who anticipates going into an arctic or subarctic environment can be selective about his equipment. He can study the types of environment he will encounter and the temperature ranges he will meet. He can study the outdoor equipment market and acquire the best clothing and personal gear for protection against relentless cold and hostile winter terrain.

Active-duty line units, be they Army or Marine, do not have the civilian option. They must be able to function over a broad spectrum of temperature changes, but must use available GI gear. GI clothing, while warm, is cumbersome and heavy. A standard outfit will weigh almost 74 pounds, and the individual who must manipulate both his clothing and equipment — and put his weapon in play — may have difficulty reacting efficiently to an ambush. Furthermore — as was noted at Fort Drum — GI equipment is inadequate for wet cold although suitable for dry cold.

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To compensate for the limitations of regular-issue gear and clothing, the combat leader must prepare for potential problems before they occur. Remember to check the troops' equipment — from socks to sleeping bags — and stress the principle of layering. Controlling those factors that you can will help you defeat the relentless, silent enemy — cold weather.



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## VANG PAO

*Continued from page 54*

Because of political maneuvering in the Lao army, Vang Pao remained a major for four years, but then was on his way up again and became the only Muong general in the Royal Laotian Army in 1964. In 1966 he was promoted to major general.

## March to Dien Bien Phu

Vang Pao, as mentioned before, does not like to tell war stories — either about the French-Viet Minh war in which he fought or the years he served fighting the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese alongside Americans, but he did mention one incident he recalls vividly.

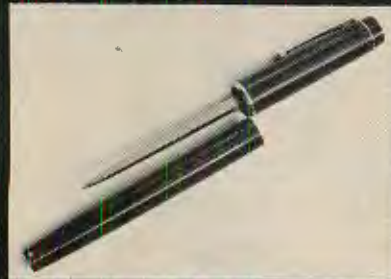
"My unit was marching to the relief of Dien Bien Phu and we got orders to halt for a day. The very next day Dien Bien Phu fell."

Nowadays Vang Pao deals with more mundane things than capturing a billion dollars of communist-bloc equipment or almost being captured, or killed, at Dien Bien Phu.

He receives innumerable phone calls and letters from the Muong every day — I counted 14 during one day I spent with him.

Vang Pao is head of a non-profit organization called Lao Family Community Inc., which he set up to help his people deal with the many problems facing them in this country.

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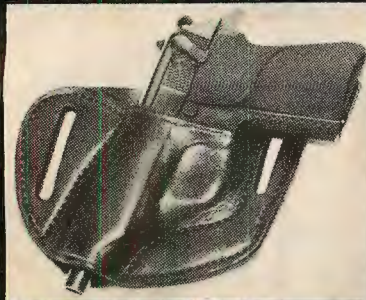
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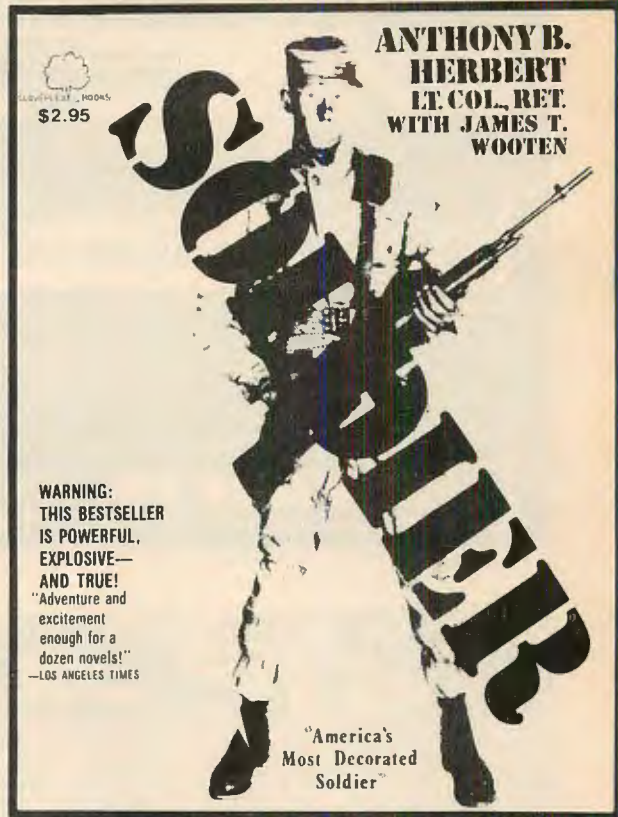
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These include a high-unemployment rate, particularly for those located in or around large American cities. Few of the Muong speak English yet. They do not want to be assimilated into the mainstream of U.S. society like other immigrants — they want to keep to themselves, speak their native dialects, maintain their old customs and eat the same type of food they did in Asia. They have growing mental-health problems because they have been unable thus far to blend in with Americans — and their suicide rate is high.

And perhaps worst of all, the only law they wish to recognize is that of their tribes, which has been handed down for hundreds of generations. Now they find themselves governed by laws they do not understand, administered in a language in which they are not conversant.

## Marital Misery

For example, Vang Pao recalls the case of a Muong family whose 12-year-old daughter wanted to get married. That's fine in Laos but, of course, it's not acceptable in this country.

"The families cannot understand this," Vang Pao says. "In Laos, if a boy wanted to marry a girl, he simply went to her village, took her by the hand and they went home together."

Vang Pao likes Americans — has ever since he first met them in the Laotian hills in the early 1960s — but he is often frustrated by their failure to realize that all Southeast Asian refugees are not South Vietnamese.

A sizable proportion of the Vietnamese over here are well educated and speak English — they learned it in places like Saigon, Nha Trang and Danang while Vang Pao's people were roaming the hills killing communists and rescuing American fliers.

## Home In The Hills

Vang Pao likes it in the Valley of the Bitterroot — the area closely resembles home at Long Cheng. He searched the entire U.S. to find it and picked it from among three other valleys in Montana. However, he says he will return to Laos one day.

"There is much unhappiness there with the way things turned out," he said, "even among the former Pathet Lao. They thought they would attain leadership of the country upon victory. But that didn't turn out to be so. The North Vietnamese simply came in and shoved them aside."

Vang Pao claims this won't always be so, although he is vague about how it might change. He hints at an alliance of former non-communist Laotians and former Pathet Lao and says he believes he could work with his former enemies be-

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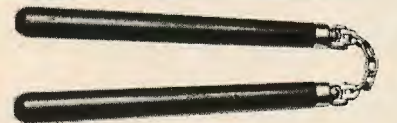


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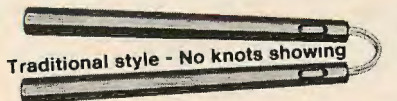


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cause they are disillusioned with the Vietnamese.

There is still much fighting going on in Laos, the general says, and Laotians are fleeing across the Mekong River to Thailand: "Every day I get many letters from them."

### Historical Background

It was a clear, crisp, sunny Montana day and Vang Pao and I were strolling around his property, which includes a two-story white frame house, large barn and several small outbuildings. Although he persisted in his strong reluctance to discuss his personal part in the Southeast Asian war, he was willing to discuss strategy and history. I asked him why he thought the Americans and non-communist Southeast Asians ultimately lost.

He answered immediately: "I think it all goes back to the Korean war and Red Chinese intervention in that war," he said. "You Americans had a great victory there until that happened. But they drove you back to South Korea and, ever since, the Americans have been wary of the Chinese."

"Besides, in Southeast Asia there were two big communist powers supplying their sides — Russia as well as China. China furnished mainly such things as food, clothing and the 'softer' needs of war. Russia mainly supplied the weapons."

"But fear of active Chinese intervention kept the Americans from carrying the war to North Vietnam."

"Then when Nixon and Kissinger decided they wanted detente with China and started talking to them, Southeast Asia was doomed."

### Firewood For Winter

The general smiled and added, "But that's all in the past. We must think about the future. And the future right now for me is that winter is coming up and I must get in another load of firewood. I've already got one load in and will need about two more. If you'll excuse me, I'll get the truck out and get this done before dark."

From global strategy — what is probably a succinct interpretation of it — to firewood in a few sentences. Vang Pao and his 18 military decorations, including two awards of the French Legion of Honor and one American Legion of Merit, is a brave man. He is as intelligent as he is compassionate concerning his people.

The first time I met Vang Pao was in 1967 at Long Cheng after an obliging Air America pilot, ignoring orders from the U.S. Embassy to the contrary, flew me there in a little Helio — a single-engine transport often used to fly into the short, dirt airstrips, so many of which were the only landing strips in Laos.

Vang Pao, myself and Pop Buell, at that time the senior U.S. Agency for In-

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ternational Aid (USAID) representative in Laos, stood on a hill overlooking the valley. Vang Pao said, "You really ought to go to Ba Na. That's the closest outpost we have to the Plain des Jarres. Buell added, "Yeah. If you want to find out what these people are all about you should go there."

The same pilot agreed to fly me and a load of ammunition up there. We were also accompanied by an American in uniform but without insignia — I never knew whether he was a U.S. soldier or a CIA operative.

After buzzing Ba Na's postage-stamp airstrip once to clear it of a collection of sleeping hogs, we landed and walked over to the village of perhaps 300 occupants.

The men wore a patchwork collection of clothing, ranging from little more than loin cloths to bits and pieces of U.S., Chinese and North Vietnamese uniforms. They were armed with a motley clutch of weapons, from old French Mas rifles to M16s to AK-47s. The weapons had but one thing in common — they were clean and ready to fire.

The village chief insisted that we stay the night and be his guests at what passed for a Muong banquet. At one point during the evening he said something forcefully to the Muong-speaking American in uniform and I asked him for a translation. "He said," replied my companion, "they've pushed us this far back but this is as far as we're going: We're not going to leave this village — alive."


We flew out the next morning to Long Cheng, and then on to Vientiane, the capital. I have often since wondered what became of that little band of Muong. They probably didn't leave their hilltop. Alive.

Vang Pao came very close to remaining in Long Cheng, too. When the final collapse came, Air America managed to ferry some 3,000 Muong fighting men and their families from Long Cheng to safety in Thailand.

The last man to board one of those aircraft was Maj. Gen. Vang Pao.



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Continued from page 25

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*Kurt Priebe is a new contributor to SOF's In-Review pages. He served with the U.S. Army in 1974-75 and now holds an A.A. degree in law enforcement, though he currently works out of Washington as a free-lance writer.*

*Priebe is an avid sportsman, and his hobbies include collecting police insignia and guns.*

*"My goal," says Priebe, "is to make \$1,000,000 writing a best seller about my military experience, and to live and travel in New Zealand."*

*Good luck, Kurt, and welcome aboard!*



## SHARPSHOOTING

Continued from page 10

"see-through mount" which makes it possible to use either the telescopic sight or the iron sights. I have never seen one of these designs that I liked, and I have tried a variety of them over the years on everything from .22 rimfires to a .338 magnum. They all require a high cheek weld on the rifle stock, and this is not conducive to good shooting. It is impossible to put one's head in the same position each time and this creates parallax. Tilting up the head to see through the scope also takes longer than it does with the scope mounted lower, and it is uncomfortable to shoot prone or with rifles of any appreciable recoil.

I had an AR 180 with the factory see-through mount and shot many coyotes with this rifle, but it was slow to get on target as I had to adjust my head carefully to get a good, full view through the scope. This particular mount had such a narrow, dark tunnel through the base that using the iron sights took even longer, and they were worthless in dim light. Since the scope can be removed quickly anyway, why have these things?

The HK design does allow more light through when using the iron sights, but I can't help but feel that these see-through mounts appeal mainly to the novice who has not yet learned that he can't get something for nothing. The price one pays for being able to see through the mount is poor cheek weld and a top-heavy rifle, making the already unwieldy HK 91 even more so.

This rifle just doesn't point well — and hanging a one-pound scope several inches above the top of the receiver would ruin the handling characteristics of even an FN FAL. Since HK designs are muzzle-heavy, installing a scope does help move the center of balance farther toward the rear, but one still has a rifle that is top-heavy and cumbersome.

## A Better Way

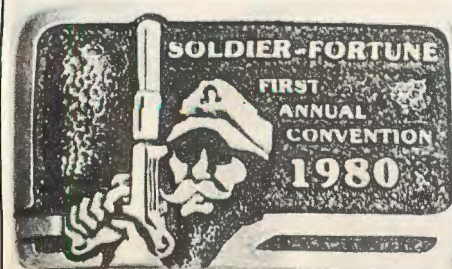
After talking with several gunsmiths and Jeff Cooper about the sight problem, I began to realize that it might be possible to put an American-made base on the HK receiver, and then mount the scope low, as it should be. Even if this meant removing the front and rear sights, I was prepared to do so, because I felt the rifle was such a hulk that it might be improved by being scoped only. After all, it is accurate, so why not mount a scope onto the receiver and leave it there?

Jeff kindly loaned me his CETME, which has scope bases welded onto the receiver at the factory, and I sent this and my HK to gunsmith Keith Hamilton, who does the best metal work on the 1911 Colt of anyone I know. His machining is



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perfect. A front sight mounted by him will never shoot loose, and a low-mounted, dehorned Bo-Mar looks as if it grew out of the slide. Many of the best IPSC shooters in the Northwest use pistols modified by Keith Hamilton — and we all agree that he is among the best.

After examining the CETME, Hamilton decided to use a one-piece Redfield base, with the bottom machined to fit the contour of the HK receiver. Rather than weld the bases along the sides as the people at CETME did, he placed a piece of ribbon solder between the base and the receiver, brought the base up to temperature, and touched off the solder.

Two screws held the base in place during this operation and were left in place to act as recoil lugs afterward. They were filed down flush with the inside of the receiver to provide clearance for the bolt group as it recoils. Hamilton then re-blued the receiver and discovered that HK does not blue its rifles — but paints them! He sandblasted the whole upper receiver and re-blued it again. This time it stuck and the finish is non-reflective, in keeping with the rifle's design.

Hamilton charged me only \$80 for his work — and that included his purchase of the Redfield base. Redfield rings can be bought for as little as \$16, which means that after figuring in shipping and insurance, one still saves about \$65 over the purchase of the HK factory mount with rings.

## Scopes

I mounted a Leupold four-power scope on the rifle as soon as I received it. Because I was thinking of leaving the scope on permanently, I selected a fairly low-power model. I also selected a fixed-power scope because it is less likely to break than a variable one. If this was going to be my only method of sighting my HK, I wanted as strong and well-made a scope as I could get.

A four-power scope allows one to see a man from the top of his head down almost to his knees at 15 yards' distance. A three-power takes in all of him and a six-power his chest and head only. My Leupold was a good compromise.

When I mounted the scope I realized that Hamilton had contributed another valuable innovation to this project. He mounted the base much farther forward than I would have thought to do. This allows me to place the objective lens right in front of the iron sights, so I can still mount the scope low without removing the modified Williams aperture sight I use in place of the factory's turret.

When I saw what Hamilton had done, I immediately ordered a Pilkington quick-detachable (QD) lever, which allows me to remove the scope from a Redfield base without loss of zero. Maybe I could have my cake and eat it too!

While I was waiting for the QD lever to

# PMRS TRAINING

The 1st Airborne, Ltd. of Shreveport, La., has agreed to provide a special airborne training course for Parachute Medical Rescue Service (PMRS) Emergency Volunteers at Natchitoches, La., 24-26 April 1981. The course will consist of complete prejump training and one jump — more if time and weather permit. For experienced jumpers, there will be a jump refresher course and one (or more) jumps. PMRS Emergency Volunteers who successfully complete the course will receive PMRS/1st Airborne certification which is a requirement for deployment on PMRS missions.

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PMRS Emergency Volunteers desiring to enroll in this course should cut out and send in the attached form with a donation of \$150 payable to Parachute Medical Rescue Service, 1122 Edgemoor Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49008. If you are not a PMRS member but would like to enroll, please write us at the above address or call (616) 345-0418 for further information.

PMRS is an all-volunteer, non-governmental, non-profit disaster relief organization whose president is Robert K. Brown, Editor and Publisher of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine. The 1st Airborne is a non-profit, non-governmental parachute organization composed of ex-military jumpers and former members of the now-defunct Airborne Division of the Confederate Air Force. Its commander is Madro Bandaries of Shreveport, La.

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arrive, I experimented with mounting the Leupold scope with the objective lens in front of the Williams sight. I had to crawl up the stock a little more than I was used to and this bothered me for a while. It put the scope in the right position for shooting prone, however. With a little practice one gets a full field of view out of the scope from any shooting position.

A faint ghost image of the Williams sight appears in the lower portion of the scope, but since one does not focus on it, he soon gets used to seeing it there, and it has not bothered anyone who has shot my rifle. The ring around the front post-sight can be bothersome, however. Although it barely shows up in the field of view of the four-power Leupold, it can be annoying when shooting into the sun. Both post and ring are flat black, but they still reflect light and one loses definition of the target area. I decided that if the Pilkington QD lever really offered an accurate return to zero, I would mount a six-power Leupold on the rifle instead of the four — to restrict the field of view enough so the front post and ring are cut out entirely.

I would then simply use the Williams aperture sight (or a .45), for shooting within 15 yards.

I tried several variable-power scopes so I could report on them and found that I *had* to remove the rear iron sight to use a variable. The extra inch or so that the power-adjustment ring takes up on most

variables makes it impossible to mount the scope far enough forward to clear the rear sight — at least I found this to be the case with a Redfield 3x9 wide view and a Leupold 1.5x5. I don't consider variable-power scopes to be worth the inconvenience — plus, I've seen too many of them break under strenuous use.

I tried a couple of these scopes on the HK for a week, with the objective mounted over the turret or aperture-sight position, and found that the high rings I used could have been replaced with medium rings for this application. The medium rings could also be used if a four-power Leupold compact scope were used in place of the standard model when mounting the scope ahead of the iron sights. The one advantage of both these systems is that a lower cheek weld is possible than with my preferred system.

Having the iron sight between one's eye and the objective lens does take a little getting used to, but now I would not have it any other way.

### The Pilkington QD Lever

I fired about 150 rounds through the rifle with the Leupold mounted in front of the Williams aperture sight and found no problem with the base and rings maintaining zero. Hamilton's installation works. Initially I did run into trouble with the Pilkington QD lever, however.

Following the instructions, I used Krazy Glue® to bond the screw opposite the QD lever in place — so that when the lever was tightened up the rings would butt up against the opposite factory-made screw and the scope would accurately return to its previous zero — but the Krazy Glue® did not bond the screw into place. Removing the scope created a two-inch shift in windage, left or right, without warning.

This system would shoot a good group — but not where it belonged! My second try with Krazy Glue® also failed to maintain windage, but elevation held perfectly. The instructions for the QD lever suggested that using low-temperature silver solder would result in improved installation. I couldn't find anyone willing to do this work for me locally so I tried high-strength-grade Lock-Tite®. It worked! Windage shifted only ½ inch left and elevation was about one inch low. Not perfect return to zero, but acceptable.

My *best* groups were at 100 and 300 yards. My *worst* groups were as much as three inches at 100 yards for six shots (after removing the scope every other shot). This was no better than my best 300-yard group (also removing the scope between strings). I honestly can't say how much of this variation was due to poor ammunition, unfamiliarity with a bipod, the low-power scope or the QD lever.

I have in the past been able to wring out

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honest-to-god 1/2-inch groups with this rifle, using some lots of National Match ammunition with iron sights. The ammo I used in some of these tests turned out to be a bad lot of National Match, however, and I can see why it was surplussed. Three-inch groups were all I could get with the same iron sights I had used for the 1/2-inch groups, and it was no better with the scope!

I reverted to some 45-grain handloads of H 335 and the 150-grain Hornady FMJ BT bullet. I would shoot either two- or three-shot groups and then remove the scope and shoot another group after reinstalling the scope. I then checked for placement of the group as well as group size.

I fired about 100 rounds through the HK and removed the scope in an almost whimsical manner. Removing the scope does not seem to hamper the group size of the shots, just their placement.

## Conclusions

By leaving the scope in place after zeroing it and not removing it between strings, I was able to routinely put four out of five center hits on an IPSC item target at 400 yards, firing prone with the bipod. My flyer, which I called, was a four. Not bad for a removable scope mount!

However, I will not be completely happy with this mount until I get that screw silver-soldered into place. It may then be possible for me to equal the above performance and still remove the scope between shots. This is my as-yet-unrealized goal.

Even with its temporary Lock-Tite® installation, the QD lever does offer some exciting possibilities. For only the price of a set of rings, one can add any number of scopes to the rifle in a matter of seconds — and if a scope is damaged in a fire fight it can be removed in a few seconds to give one access to his iron sights.

This feature alone is well worth the slight loss of accuracy when compared to a permanently installed scope.

If one zeroes the scope and doesn't take it off just to amaze his friends, he will get center hits on a man out to 400 yards using the HK. When shooting beyond that range, I would seriously consider the use of a six-power Leupold instead of the four-power. And one could just about pay for it with what he saved not buying an HK mount.

When ordering one of the Hamilton-modified bases, I would suggest you have Keith Hamilton install the QD lever himself. This is best done if he has your scope on hand. Then Hamilton can silver-solder the base screw in place after determining just how far in it should go. He has to have your scope to do this. He could even

use high-temperature silver-solder, since he has to re-blue the receiver after installing the base anyway.

Your installation may be even more accurate than the one I have evaluated. In fact, it may be perfect!

HK, U.S.A., has a well-deserved reputation for listening to constructive criticism and being helpful to their clients. But they also take their own sweet time delivering rifles, pistols and components. There is no reason why they could not offer a scope base similar to the one Hamilton designed. This would cut down delivery time considerably, since it could be manufactured and installed in the United States. I believe this base offers a great deal of promise. Although it may not yet be perfect, I see no reason why it could not be made so. It is at the very least a promising design worthy of further study.

If you would like to let HK, U.S.A., know you would like to have an American-made, low-mounted, removable scope, contact them at Dept SOF, 933 N. Kenmore, Arlington, VA 22210.

I am sure that if they bring out a similar design it would be a good one and well made.

I am also sure that if Keith Hamilton installs the QD lever it will be excellent in design and execution. He can be reached at Dept. SOF, Box 871, Gridley, CA 95948, home phone (916) 846-3968.

## CAUTION

Readers responding to a classified ad in the center column on p. 93 of the January 1981 issue of SOF are cautioned that they do so at their own risk. The ad begins "IMMEDIATE OPENINGS with exceptional private army." The ad seeks \$10, up front from those interested and gives an address of 2509 N. Campbell, Suite 233, Tucson, Ariz., with the name of Dan Long. That address is a mail drop in Tucson and an SOF investigator with good police connections was unable to locate a Dan Long in Tucson or Pima County.

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**BULLETIN BOARD**

Continued from page 6

**SWATF vs. SWAPO ...**

The South African government has established a South West African Territory Force (SWATF) to defend the region, which has been under attack by SWAPO guerrillas for years.

This is also in line with the South African policy of the creation of a pro-Pretoria government in the territory prior to granting it independence.

The SWATF is composed of local troops fighting alongside men from the South African Defense Force and it would be the nucleus of an independent South West African Army.

South West Africa, also known as Namibia, was mandated to South Africa by the League of Nations after WWI when the Allied powers were carving up the former German empire, of which South West Africa had been a part.

But the United Nations wants South Africa to divest itself of the territory even if communist SWAPO guerrillas would triumph because of it. In fact, many UN members would prefer to see SWAPO win.

Most of the SWATF is organized along the South African commando system, which operates as a paramilitary force defending the area in which members live. There are presently 26 such commando units in the SWATF, all drawn from the local population and all considered to be readily mobilized reserve units.

The SWATF commandos are backed up by the 91 South West Africa Brigade — a motorized unit composed of three infantry battalions, an armored car regiment and an artillery regiment. Only one of the infantry battalions is made up of permanent personnel, the rest being citizen-force units.

SWATF also has six permanent light-infantry battalions under South African Defense Force leadership.

Another permanent element is a South West African Specialist Unit which tracks down guerrillas on horseback and by motorcycle.

The SWATF is also in the process of forming an air force from the 1 South West African Squadron — a reservist unit which flies light aircraft.

**MEDICS TREAT M198 PAINS ...**

That new lightweight artillery piece, the M198 155mm howitzer which the Army is building for its airborne and airmobile units, has its problems.

Army doctors report that it has such a powerful backblast that gun crews are suffering headaches, nose-

bleeds, chest pains and hearing loss.

While doctors are studying the problem and trying to resolve it, gun crews have been ordered to fire the weapon only from a distance by pulling on a 25-foot lanyard.

Tests are underway at the Army medical research center, Fort Detrick, Md., and the artillery school at Fort Sill, Okla.

In most artillery pieces, the blast overpressure is forced forward, away from the crew, when the gun recoils. But on the M198 there is no recoil. To keep the gun's weight to under 16,000 pounds — so it can be moved by helicopter — the gun was not given the extra weight necessary to absorb the recoil. Instead, a muzzle brake was designed that forces the pressure back.

**STAFFER KEMP HOT GUNNER ...**

SOF staffer Rocky Kemp remains on a hot streak with his Hoag-modified .45 auto. He was just awarded a "leg" medal by the Department of the Army and an "Excellence in Competition" award for placing second in a regional service-pistol match in Phoenix, Ariz. Kemp also placed third overall in the Northern Arizona Practical Marksman combat shoot. Most recently, he placed 10th in the Action Shooting Open PPC match in California and won seven medals in the State Championships.

**ESP IN 'NAM ...**

An SOF reader named Bruce McAllister reports that he is writing a novel based on the "ESP/clairvoyance/out-of-body experiences of a Green Beret in Vietnam."

He would like to hear from any others who have had a similar experience in combat. Anyone willing to acknowledge such an experience and to correspond may qualify for a modest fee as a consultant. McAllister will respond to all letters written to him at Communications Program, University of Redlands, Redlands, CA 92373. A number of publishers have expressed interest, he says.

**MORE ON TEXAS NG ...**

That exceptional Texas National Guard unit, the 36th Airborne (see SOF, April, 1980, p. 46), has been reconstituted and is now better than ever, according to a member of the unit, S.Sgt. Jerry Abell.

The former 36th is now composed of an Airborne Ranger Long Range Patrol unit, Co. G, 143rd Infantry Battalion; the First Battalion, 133rd Field Ar-



tillery, 49th Armored Division; and the 386th Combat Engineer Battalion.

Abell reports that the outfit is close to full strength but there are a few openings. Texans interested may contact Commanding Officer, 386th Engineer Battalion, 1800 Old Spanish Trail, Houston, TX 77054.

## RUSSIAN NAVY AT CAM RANH BAY ...

The People's Republic of China has confirmed earlier Western intelligence reports that the Soviet Union has established a major naval base at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, once a major staging and supply center for American forces during the Vietnam war.

"Cam Ranh Bay has been practically handed over to the Kremlin and has been made its main naval and air base in Southeast Asia," said Xinhua, the official Chinese news agency.

The agency said Soviet warships and planes are using the huge base with its deep water port to monitor U.S. Navy movements at Subic Bay in the Philippines, along the South China coast and the Straits of Malacca.

Western sources say that at any given time there are up to 20 Soviet warships based at Cam Ranh, plus supply vessels, "hydrological research ships" — read spy ships — and several submarines.

And, say Western intelligence analysts, further north at Da Nang, the Russians have established a major supply base for their TU-95 long-range reconnaissance aircraft and TU-114 anti-submarine planes.

The Russian presence at Cam Ranh holds a touch of irony. It was there that the Japanese fleet rendezvoused in 1902 prior to sailing for Tsushima Straits where it inflicted a stunning defeat on the Russian navy during the Russo-Japanese war.

## CARTER IN GOOD COMPANY ...

An Army Spec. 4 in Germany writes SOF: "First I'd like to say thanks for an up-to-date magazine and telling it like it is. Second, I thought you should see the enclosed clipping of *Stars and Stripes*. I still can't believe it. How about you?"

The item from UPI is headlined: "Carter Eyed for Nobel Peace Prize," and the lead paragraph notes that former President Carter was among 71 candidates for the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize.

No. We can't believe it, either. Oh well, Carter is — for him — in good company. Another nominee is Zimbabwe Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, the former terrorist.

MARCH/81

## NERVE GAS PRESSURE ...

In the face of opposition from the former Carter administration, Pentagon and State Department, Congress is pressing for renewed production of nerve-gas weapons.

The House and Senate both want to end an 11-year moratorium on producing such weapons — without consulting U.S. allies in Europe. The State Department fretted that they might cause injured feelings on the only continent where extensive use of gas warfare has ever occurred.

The House has authorized construction of a \$3.15 million chemical-munitions plant at the Pine Bluff, Ark., arsenal. Authorization came after less than an hour's floor debate, with only 25 of the 435 House members present.

The Pine Bluff facility would manufacture binaries — gas shells with chemicals kept separately in compartments. Upon firing, the chemicals unite to form a lethal or debilitating agent.

The Senate Armed Service Committee approved the plant with only Sens. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) and John Warner (R.-Va.) present.



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Rocky Kemp fires Leader T-2 5.56mm prototype.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Al Myka has long been associated with the firearms industry, most notably with Armalite, Inc.

A former Marine, he competes in silhouette shooting, high-powered rifle, air rifle, air pistol and combat shooting. He holds a degree in and has taught industrial technology, primarily machine shop and welding. He has provided consultation to police and military units regarding firearms and special equipment. He lives in Orange County, Calif.

# AUSSIE ASSAULT RIFLE

## SOF Tests Leader From Down Under

Text & Photos by Al Myka



T-2 (above) compared to AR-180. T-2 stock will be plastic.



**U**NTIL recently, successful assault-rifle development has been dominated by the U.S. and Europe. It is therefore interesting to learn that a new, compact, reliable 5.56mm assault rifle has been developed in Australia by Charles Giorgio, a gunsmith there. It is called the Leader T-2 and is manufactured and marketed by Leader Dynamics of Sydney, Australia.

Ed Hoffman of World Public Safety (Los Angeles) heard of the Leader T-2 and arranged for a demonstration. Bryan Shaw and Jack Allen of Leader Dynamics arrived with a prototype T-2 for testing. *Soldier of Fortune* Contributing Editor Rocky Kemp and I attended the test.

Hands-on firing was conducted at a local gun club, subject to range rules — maximum five rounds per magazine and shooting only at approved targets. All four of us inspected and fired the rifle. Kemp got first crack, commenting that he preferred a 7.62mm to the 5.56mm. Allen suggested we test and evaluate the T-2 before discussing caliber preferences.

### Can It Shoot?

We loaded standard M16, AR-15, AR-18/180 magazines with five rounds each and fired at NRA small-bore 100-yard targets.

Kemp, an accomplished high-powered-rifle shooter, fired the best groups. It is easy to keep a good sight picture while squeezing off rounds from the weapon. Particularly appealing is the rapid locktime because of the light, segmented firing pin. I was impressed by the light recoil, due to excellent balance and weight distribution.

We then took a mixture of commercially reloaded ammunition, both hardball and soft-point, various lots of GI ball, Winchester and Remington soft-point ammo, and fired all of it, except for one lot of soft-point reloads which proved too mild to work the action.

Leader T-2 with single-point mount. Mount setup was not operational.



Allen said that this was because the T-2 is designed for ball-loaded ammo. However, reloads up to factory standards will operate with the T-2. Allen noted that this problem is common to rifles employing a gas-operated system. We also fed a collection of corroded, misfired, bent and dented ammo through the T-2. Only one round failed to chamber, and a tap of the cocking handle drove it home. All rounds fired and ejected smoothly.

Allen provided an in-depth look at the rifle. Stripping the action was easy. Of break-open form, the upper and lower receiver hinges in front, like the AR-15. A holdback catch prevents the bolt carrier from flying back at the shooter — a nice innovation. The receiver's upper half resembles the AR-180. The gas and bolt system, bolt carrier and guide rods also fit the Armalite pattern. I think that this basic bolt and bolt-carrier system is best for assault rifles, but Leader T-2 has employed it in an unusual way.

The bolt carrier is shorter than conven-

tional designs. The cam slot to rotate the bolt is in the right place, but the bolt has only three locking lugs. These lugs are, however, large and flat with more surface area than found on similar designs. This makes for a safe lockup.

The design of this bolt — a small-diameter bolt rotates into a barrel extension — enables one to use a high-pressure cartridge in a very short design.

Other designs incorporate several locking lugs in order to achieve the necessary degree of safety. But part of the problem with the M16 and the AR-180 is that the area behind those lugs fills with dirt, powder residue and rust in combat conditions, reducing reliability because the bolt does not always rotate to the full position.

The Leader people realized this and decided that using fewer lugs with more surface area would have the effect of cleaning away the dirt and grit that accumulate in that area. So they made the lugs larger and flatter — actually an increase in width.

This makes for a safer gun, able to fire under all kinds of conditions — plus it is a lot simpler to manufacture.

Jack Allen test-sights T-2 with single-point mount.



Detail shot of Leader T-2 rear sight.

### TECHNICAL DATA LEADER T2 SERIES

	MK 1,2 & 5	MK 3	MK 4
Caliber	5.56mm (.223")	5.56mm (.223")	5.56mm (.223")
Total Length	910mm (35.875")	910mm (35.875")	520mm (20.5")
Barrel Length	410mm (16.156")	410mm (16.156")	260mm (10.250")
Rifling Grooves	6	6	6
Rifling Twist R.H.	305mm (12")	305mm (12")	305mm (12")
Feed Magazine	10/20 Rounds	20/30 Rounds	20/30/40 Rounds
Muzzle Velocity	975m/sec (3200f/sec)	975m/sec (3200f/sec)	855m/sec (2800f/sec)
Firing Method:	Self loading, semi automatic	Selective	Selective
Cyclic Rate of Fire	—	450/500 rpm	450/500 rpm
Sight Radius	420mm (16.5")	420mm (16.5")	370mm (14.562")
Sight Type	Front: Protected post, Rear: Revolving aperture, windage adjustable	Front: Protected post, Rear: Revolving aperture, windage adjustable	Front: Protected post, Rear: Revolving aperture, windage adjustable
Weight	3.4Kg (7.5 lb.)	3.4Kg (7.5 lb.)	2.7Kg (5.9 lb.)
Flash Suppressor	—	Standard	Standard
System of Operation	Gas piston operated	Gas piston operated	Gas piston operated

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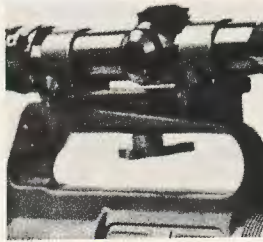
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The bolt carrier rides on two guide rods with return springs to provide return feed and chambering. Clearance is adequate to keep the T-2 working under harsh field conditions.

The T-2 is designed to be used locally by the Australian armed forces. Australia is a dusty country and the soil is abrasive. It's hard on tools and guns. When one combines dust and dirt with lubricant and powder residue and fires a thousand rounds without cleaning, many guns would jam. But the T-2 is designed to take this abuse. Allen says thousands of rounds have been put through the T-2 prototype with few malfunctions.

The gas system employed is of conventional design. Gas tapped off the barrel port drives a cylinder to move an actuation rod against the bolt carrier. So far, so good; but the blow is hard and sharp. Allen confirmed this, saying that due to the short 16-inch barrel, some powders will not burn completely. The fixed-piston, mobile-cylinder design relieves this problem, however, and permits an absence of cleaning rings. We feel this is a practical approach, enabling the T-2 to work in extreme cold and heat without special modification.

We then examined the lower receiver, similar to the AR-15, except a strong crossbar is welded over the rotating safety (to dissuade full-auto conversions).

The stock and forearm are DuPont Zytel®, rugged and durable. The barrel is 4150 ordnance steel.

The T-2 unloaded weighs seven pounds, and its 36-inch overall length makes this rifle a fast-handling weapon. Compared to the Armalite AR-180, the Leader T-2 is small, yet it shot like a full-size rifle. The straight-line construction mated with the bolt system produced minimum recoil and low torque upon firing, and virtually no muzzle climb. This rifle is based on sound, tested engineering principles. It's well built and rugged — like the land it's from.

The shooters agreed that when the Leader T-2 arrives in the States, it will become popular.

The rifle will be sold in at least five different versions in the United States: Mark 1 and 2 (semi-automatic, wood stock), Mark 3 (full automatic), Mark 4 (full automatic, machine pistol) and Mark 5 (semi-automatic, Zytel® stock). The price is expected to be \$480.

Those interested in further details on the weapon should contact: Jack Allen, Leader Dynamics, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 257, Smithfield, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia; Ed Hoffman, World Public Safety, Dept. SOF, 5855 Green Valley Circle #105, Culver City, CA 90320; or MK-V, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 5337, Orange, CA 92665.



**FLAK**

*Continued from page 8*

**STEN IN REVERSE ...**

Sirs:

In "Sharpshooting with Chairman Jeff" (SOF, December '80), you have uncovered a previously unknown and rare variant of the STEN. This is the first time I have seen one with the mag on the right side (was this made for left-handed people?) Kidding aside, it's obvious the negative was "flopped" when the plates were made (note also the sergeant's reversed patch). You have a great magazine, despite the odd photo.

Yours truly,  
Robert J. Fox  
St. Petersburg, Florida

*You're one of several readers who caught the flopped photo. Next time we'll catch it!—The Eds.*

**POLICE PATCHES SOUGHT ...**

Sirs:

As an ardent admirer and regular reader of SOF, I am writing to inquire whether you could assist with building up my collection of shoulder patches and cap badges from law-enforcement agencies throughout the world.

I am a lieutenant in the South Africa Reserve Police Force with close to 20 years' service, and am building up a collection of badges to be placed in a special show case in our new officers' club. At present I have approximately 100 badges which I have collected on my various overseas trips and would like to build up the largest collection in Africa. I will acknowledge each one received.

Yours sincerely,  
Lt. Roy Vincent Moore  
P.O. Box 78  
Wynberg C.P. 7824  
South Africa

*Glad to help you, Lt. Moore. We're printing your address so readers can write directly to you. Also look for badge offers in our classified section.—The Eds.*

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**CHEMICAL FACTS ...**

Sirs:

My background as a chemical engineer includes medicinal chemistry and ABC warfare training. Thus I read with fascination your article on the "X-Gas" observed in Afghanistan (see "Invisible Enemy," SOF, November '80). First off, the irritant is more likely CN (chloromandelonitrile) than CS (chloroacetophenone), or a CN/Adamsite mixture — the latter is much more effective albeit more toxic. Also, current intelligence has it that Russian ordnance still utilizes Tabun and Soman "nerve" gasses, though much more potent cholinesterase inhibitors are known (e.g., the U.S. VX series). Obviously, the rapid degradation of the former is desirable in strikes followed by occupation (VX is said to persist for weeks). Your "X-Gas" provides an interesting puzzle — perhaps I can help narrow the possibilities:

1. It must be an agent of high intrinsic potency and good metabolic stability, since it is rapid-acting and apparently has a long effective duration (for a gaseous agent, several hours is quite long, assuming short initial exposure).

2. The "therapeutic index" must be fairly high — that is, the ratio of effective dose to lethal dose (ED<sup>50</sup> divided by LD<sup>50</sup> in 50% of cases) must be good. No doubt you know that the most difficult part of chemical warfare is system delivery, especially of a nonlethal agent, in order to attain target saturation without under- or over-dosing individuals. Your article did not mention gas-induced fatalities, so I will assume there were few. Indeed, the multiplicity of variables in battlefield conditions is one of the reasons the U.S. Army has abandoned strategic deployment of Agent BZ (3-Quinuclidyl Benzilate) and other hallucinogenic incapacitants.

3. It must have residual toxicity, or at least emetic effects, since many people seem to be nauseated upon awakening.

A number of drugs and poisons which cause unconsciousness are known, but the need for volatility and relative nontoxicity eliminates most of them. My guess is that the material involved is either a gaseous or liquid-aerosol anaesthetic, possibly one now employed in medicine, applied quantitatively. For example, a Halothane (a fluorocarbon surgical anaesthetic) derivative was discovered recently with extremely high potency and long active duration.

Also, narcotic agents (e.g., Etorphine or M-99) are known with potency orders of a magnitude higher than that of LSD (and are used to good effect in large-game tranquilizing guns). The cost, as well as the potential toxicity of the latter, may be prohibitive, however.

Respectfully yours,  
Steven K. Gill  
San Francisco, California



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